Commentary

December 2004

Islam and Freedom

James Q. Wilson

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Vertigo—A Story

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Iraq: Prophets of Defeat

Gabriel Schoenfeld

After Pavarotti

Terry Teachout

An Exchange on Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV"

Books in Review

Ruth R. Wisse • *Francis Fukuyama* • *Michael J. Lewis*

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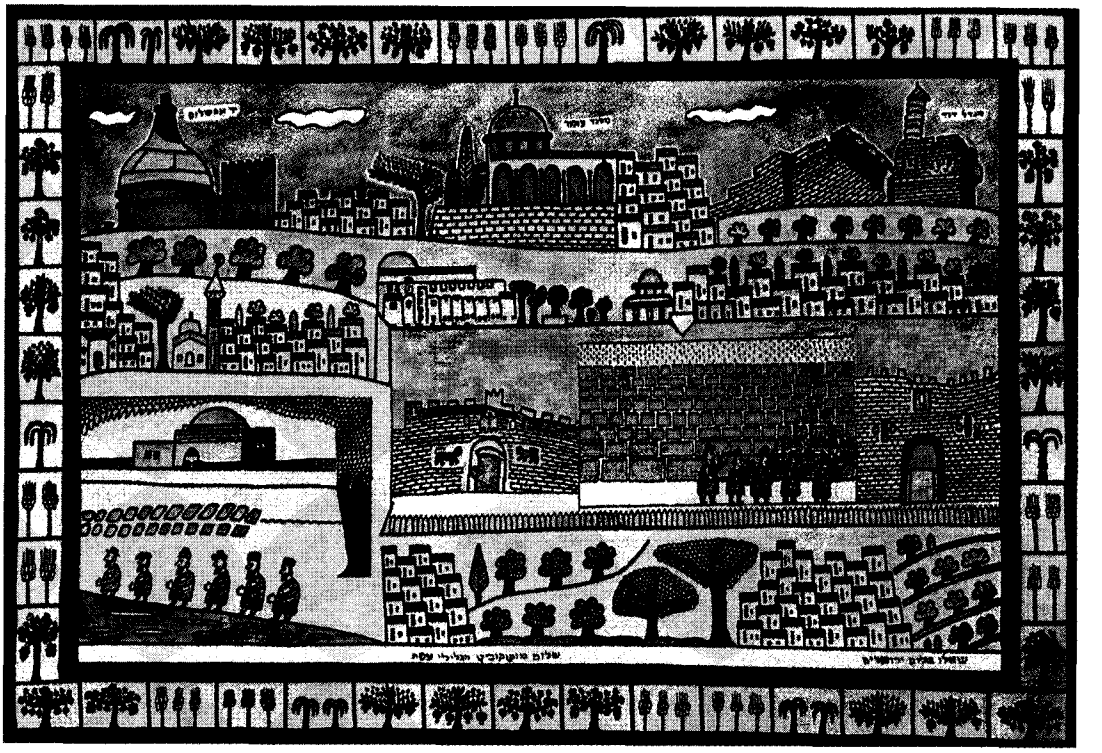

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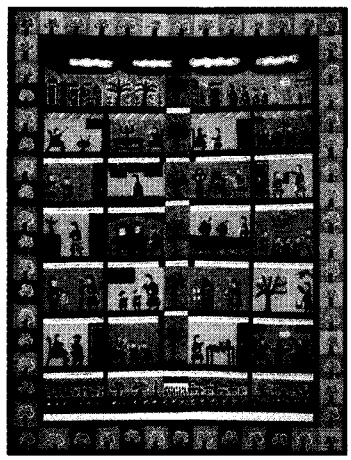

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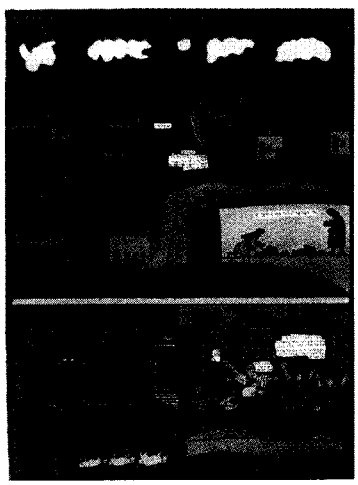

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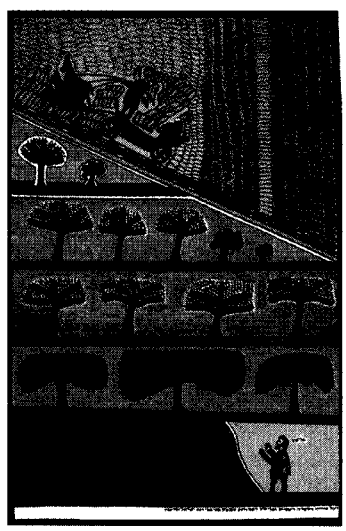

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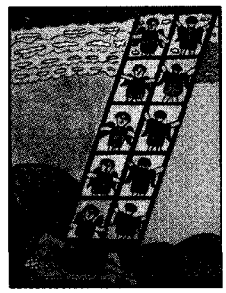

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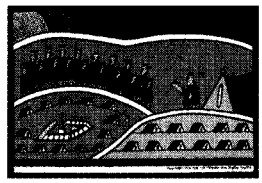

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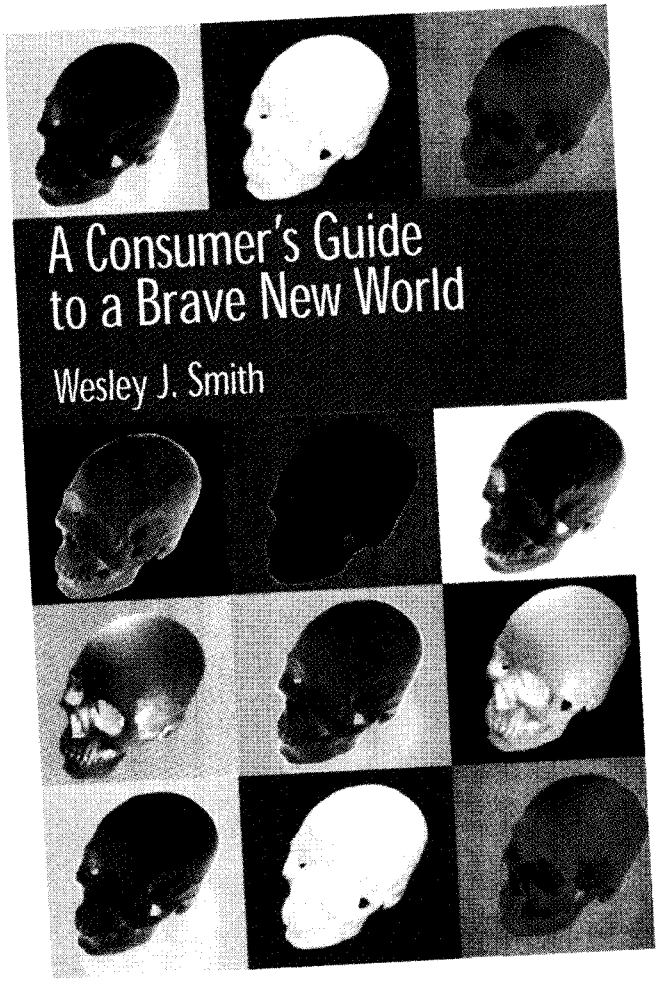

We read reports about the first human clones incubating in secret laboratories. Biotech companies brag about manufacturing human embryos as "products" for use in medical treatments. Is this "progress" or something more malicious?

A Consumer's Guide to Brave New World provides an answer to this disturbing question. Author Wesley J. Smith unravels the mystery of stem cells and shows what's at stake in the controversy over using them for research. He describes the emerging science of human cloning–the most radical technology in human history–and shows how it moves forward inexorably against the moral consensus of the world. But at the core of this book is a report on the gargantuan biotech industry and how its supporters in the universities and the science and bioethics establishments are on the verge of creating a "new eugenics."

A Consumer's Guide to a Brave New World presents a clear-eyed vision of two potential futures. In one we will control biotechnology and use it as a powerful tool to treat disease and improve the quality of our lives. But in another, darker scenario, we will be steered onto the anti-human path Aldous Huxley and other prophetic writers first warned against back when science fiction had not yet become science fact.

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Commentary
December 2004

Letters from Readers

World War IV

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's article on World War IV is extraordinary, doing what no one else has done to date ["World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win," September]. He has put the situation in context and connected all the dots, making clear the global threat facing the United States and other non-Islamic countries.

The supporters of fundamentalist Islam are fanatics who are prepared to die to kill those who observe a religion other than Islam. Mr. Podhoretz's seminal essay should be handed out on the campuses of America and everywhere else where people discuss the survival of democracy.

Edward I. Koch
New York City

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's article is a tour de force. I believe that he has correctly assessed the war, its nature, and the enemy. It will become a mini-textbook for studying this war.

John Swails
Oral Roberts University
Tulsa, Oklahoma

To the Editor:

I am encouraging everyone I know to read Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV." It is a tremendous contribution to the public discussion.

There is an old tradition, regrettably lost in most quarters, which recognizes the value of gray-haired people at the city gate mentoring the young. Mr. Podhoretz upholds that valuable tradition in an informed, reasoned, and well-communicated fashion.

Allan Erickson
Newberg, Oregon

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's article is the single finest historical and political exposition of the now not-so-nebulous forces that have plagued us for the past few decades. It is on a par with the work of George F. Kennan.

We are indeed in a raging world war, one for which we have supplied the kindling. It will either destroy us or make us stronger and better. Mr. Podhoretz's article makes it clear that the choices are stark indeed.

Randall L. Kleinman
New Orleans, Louisiana

To the Editor:

Of everything I have read on the war on terror, Norman Podhoretz's article is head and shoulders above the rest. Thank you for publishing it.

Louis-Vincent Gave
Hong Kong

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's essay is a magnificent retrospective and explanation of the Bush Doctrine, which I heartily endorse. I live in France and, as you can imagine, am a lonely voice in the wilderness when it comes to defending the Bush administration's strategy concerning World War IV.

Dwight Stedman
St. Christophe-en-Brionnais, France

To the Editor:

I cannot recall a more comprehensive, insightful analysis of the situation in Iraq than Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV." The article should be mandatory reading across college campuses today. Thank you, Mr. Podhoretz, for your insights, clear writing, and forceful analysis.

Jenene Stookesberry
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor:

Nearly everyone was shocked, horrified, and surprised by the terrorist attacks of September 11. But for me a further occasion for surprise was how quickly the nation seems to have buried those events beneath a kind of business-as-usual patina. In many

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ways, Americans' notorious penchant for ignoring history can be a blessing, as it blocks the kind of ethnic score-settling that can become such a besetting sin in traditional societies. Still, no attitude can be less helpful in the war against terrorism than historical amnesia.

For that reason, as for so many others, the nation owes a debt of gratitude to Norman Podhoretz for his lucid overview of the events of the past three years. But if I am right in expecting a long, drawn-out conflict, another factor must also be mentioned: the spread of moral narcissism in contemporary political discourse.

For me, the sure sign of such narcissism is selective indignation. Last year, COMMENTARY published an account of the regular and systematic use of torture by Saddam Hussein's regime almost from its inception ("Baghdad, with Victims," December 2003). When I would show this article to several of my more hotheaded antiwar acquaintances, immediately came the *tu quoque* retort: well, Americans once supported Saddam, so who are we to criticize?

A more egregious example of empty moralizing can be found in the different levels of outrage in the world for the plight of the Palestinians versus the plight of the Sudanese in Darfur (or the starvation of the North Koreans, or the persecution of the East Timorese, etc.).

This is a syndrome that to the best of my knowledge Friedrich Nietzsche was the first to notice:

> When one considers how much the energy of young people needs to explode, one is not surprised that they decide for this cause or that without being subtle or choosy. What attracts them is the sight of the burning fuse, and not the cause itself. Subtle seducers therefore know the art of arousing expectations of an explosion while making no effort to furnish reasons for their cause: reasons are not what win over such powder kegs.

What Nietzsche foresaw as an incipient component of bourgeois civilization has now become an outright epidemic, perhaps even the defining feature of post-industrial civilization. When liberal moralizers now claim to look out on the world, what they are seeing is not the world as it really is, but only their own self-congratulating and self-affirming mirror.

REV. EDWARD T. OAKES
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

Once again we are indebted to Norman Podhoretz for bringing together the strands of an issue that defines our times and determines our future. "World War IV" should become a standard reference as we struggle with terrorism in the years to come.

The speed with which antiwar attitudes from earlier decades rushed toward the new conflict may be better understood if we recognize that the cold war, "World War III," has become classified in the minds of a great number of people as "the unnecessary war." In their view, the hyper-armed cowboys of the U.S. pushed the rest of the world into constant danger of a nuclear holocaust when all that was necessary was to let the Soviet Union fall from its own weight. That it did fall without nuclear warfare only proves the point in their eyes.

Pacifism is too respectable a word for these attitudes of the Left. The presumed abhorrence of violence seldom extends to third-world perpetrators, nor does it respect the right of self-defense outside the sphere of designated victims.

M. DONALD COLEMAN
Mamaroneck, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

There is one point that I would like to add to Norman Podhoretz's analysis. Consider the world as it was on September 10, 2001. America's position, whether measured by economic, military, political, or cultural power, was unmatched. It dwarfed even America's position in the golden era of the 1950's, before the Vietnam-war syndrome sapped the nation's resolve. For America's class of 1968, those Mr. Podhoretz calls "jackal bins," or for their cohorts in Europe, this was *not* the way things were supposed to turn out.

Marx predicted that the failure of capitalism would lead to its rejection by the flock. Unsurprisingly, he got it backward. It is the *success* of capitalism that has led to its rejection by the priests. For the "jackal bins," 9/11 was a godsend, the last glimmer of hope that the cause to which they dedicated themselves was still alive. And given this group's entrenchment in the elite institutions of the West, it is no surprise that they can move large segments of the populace with them.

DENNIS TRAVIS
Glen Head, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's article on World War IV shows clarity, courage, and a moral engagement I have seldom had the pleasure to notice in articles on U.S. foreign policy, terrorism, and the Middle East conflict. I am Belgian, and in the last few years I have been exceedingly frustrated by the cowardly and dishonest posture of many Europeans toward the U.S and Israel in international affairs.

I have never seen a street demonstration protesting terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. But when Israel tries to stop such an attack with legitimate (and always contained) military force, our streets in Europe are immediately filled with masses of protesters, donning Palestinian kaffiyehs, waving peace flags, bashing Ariel Sharon, and insulting Jews.

Why this double standard? Think, perhaps, of a child that is bitten and killed by a mad dog. Do the streets fill up with angry people protesting the dog's behavior? Of course not. Maybe the double standard is simply that, subconsciously, many of the protesters consider Palestinians to be far less human than Israelis.

GEERT VANDENWEGHE
Tienen, Belgium

TO THE EDITOR:

Instead of furthering a noble cause, Norman Podhoretz provides justification for policies that threaten to diminish America's capacity to carry out its great mission of safeguarding liberty and fostering freedom.

What is most odd is the asymmetry in the policies Mr. Podhoretz praises. He reminds us that the cold war (what he calls "World War III"), a truly global conflict involving two superpowers with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons arrayed against each other, was brought to an end by a policy of heightened and robust containment. By

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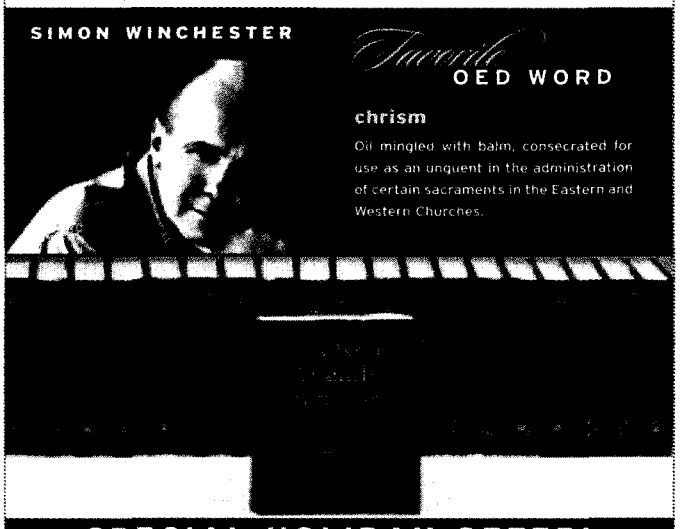
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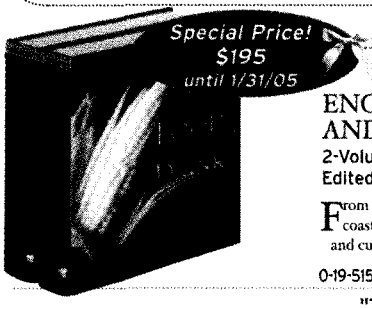

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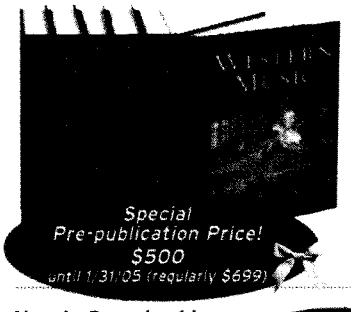

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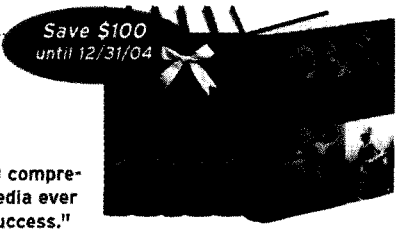

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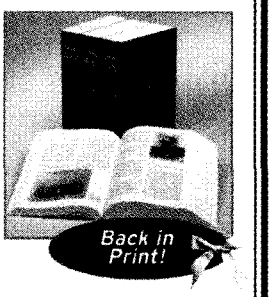

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contrast, in dealing with the breakout of "World War IV," involving stateless terrorists and rogue nations that possess none of the capability or territorial reach of the Soviet Union, Mr. Podhoretz argues in favor of the Bush Doctrine, an untested policy of continuous war involving preemptive action.

The problem for U.S. supremacy—and for the Bush Doctrine—is how to use American power *effectively*. The events of 9/11 did not change the fact that even the most powerful nation in history cannot act unilaterally or without strong alliances. Despite its swift military victory in Iraq, the U.S. lost the global debate on the policy of preemption, especially given the lack of proof for the main justifications of the war, namely, weapons of mass destruction and concrete ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

Even nations in the "coalition of the willing" now have populations strongly opposed to the war. Mr. Podhoretz just passes this off as anti-Americanism and says the U.S. should move forward. He suggests that all opposition to the Bush Doctrine belongs in the same noxious swamp as Susan Sontag and Gore Vidal, in order to label it more easily as extremist.

The change in American policy is tragic. The institutions and policies that emerged from the Truman Doctrine laid the way for a broad and—until recently—bipartisan coalition in support of democracy and America's forward engagement in the world. The result was not only the collapse of the Soviet empire but also an enduring transatlantic alliance that has formed the basis of world security for more than 50 years and that recently has seen an infusion of countries newly dedicated to democracy (and, in large measure, American leadership). But instead of drawing upon such traditions and strength, the Bush administration rebuffed NATO's pledge of support in the war on terrorism, and instead of building the strongest possible alliance against terrorism, it has cherry-picked its allies to pursue a misbegotten war.

We are witness to a new and dangerous radicalism that has misused America's global power, destroyed bipartisanship in foreign policy, and undermined established international democratic alliances. Ultimately, this will result in a divided country and greater American isolation, with fewer nations willing to join in "coalitions of the willing," leaving America weakened and more vulnerable in dealing with the present danger.

ERIC CHENOWETH
Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz succeeds in reinforcing the deep fear of many outside America (and, I suspect, many within it)—namely, that the country's current leadership is convinced that anything America does is, by definition, right.

One wonders why Mr. Podhoretz argues that the war in Iraq was essential when there were no weapons of mass destruction there, when the Baathist regime was hostile to Islamic fundamentalism, when Saddam Hussein (the "ruthless and evil" dictator) was installed and supported by a succession of American administrations, and when the invasion has not brought about a new and robust democracy but even more instability, with many Iraqis (who were expected to be grateful) flocking to Islamic fundamentalism.

The reason there is so much opposition to the war is not, as Mr. Podhoretz claims, that hand-wringing and weak left-wing politics are overtaking the media and ignoring public opinion. It is simply that, in light of the aforementioned facts, the war in Iraq was wrong. No matter how laudable its intentions, the war had no legal or moral basis.

By all means, we should wage a war on terrorism and recognize that the enemy is smart, strong, and fanatically determined. But a different approach to the war, one no less strong on conviction but more concerned to include those like myself (rather than dismissing us as stupid, arrogant, and misinformed), might surprise Mr. Podhoretz with the degree of support it would win.

ANTHONY RIMELL
Christchurch, New Zealand

TO THE EDITOR:

Even though Norman Podhoretz offers four "pillars" in support of the Bush Doctrine, there appears to be only one: preemptive attacks against any entity deemed to be a threat to the United States. He could have just come out and said it. Why waste all that ink and paper? We are living with the aftermath of the first use of that doctrine. Is the world now a safer place?

BOB WINNERS
Glendale, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I take issue with Norman Podhoretz's caricature of the "realist" opposition to U.S. intervention in Iraq. The more intelligent realists did not dispute the possibility of effecting a political transformation there, as we did in Germany and Japan after World War II. They argued instead that our current political culture would not tolerate the necessary costs. President Bush has proved the realists' point by pursuing Wilsonian ideals with a Coolidge-like frugality.

WAYNE SEIBERT
Sylva, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

The future of the Bush Doctrine hangs in the balance in Iraq. An American failure would spoil the electorate's appetite for further large-scale preemptive actions and effectively invalidate the doctrine. An American success, conversely, would provide the legitimacy that is so urgently required for the doctrine to take root. This is the grand struggle that is being fought before the eyes of the world.

Norman Podhoretz should therefore offer more than just a diatribe against "the anti-American Left" and should frankly engage several important questions: What are the risks and potential consequences of failure in Iraq? What if a democratic or pro-American government is unsustainable? What is the likelihood, in such a case, that other, less desirable influences may ultimately fill the political void there?

One must wonder if President Bush fully grasped the gravity of these questions before his inelegant celebration of a "mission accomplished" aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln*. Tragically, it seems likely that his administration's failure to carry out its mission in Iraq will undo his own doctrine.

ROBERT KADOORI
Atlanta, Georgia

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TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz seems persuaded that anyone opposed to the invasion of Iraq misconstrues the scope of the war on terror, but many of us who strongly support the latter consider the former a misguided diversion. Precisely because World War IV is a global struggle, we cannot fight it alone.

Far from demonstrating that we cannot be pushed around, Iraq has revealed the limits of a superpower, and has provided an instruction manual for Islamic radicals on how to make the U.S. pay dearly in future conflicts.

Mr. Podhoretz lauds President Bush for having the firmness and clarity about terrorism that previous administrations lacked. But 9/11 was the most shocking attack since Pearl Harbor, and its effect on public opinion was to give Bush enormous latitude. After such an attack, other Presidents also would have invaded Afghanistan and pursued Osama bin Laden, but they would not necessarily have invaded Iraq, or abandoned Afghanistan before democracy was firmly rooted there.

Finally, it demeans President Harry S. Truman to compare him, as Mr. Podhoretz does, with President Bush. It is true that some thought Truman, like Bush, ill-prepared for the presidency, but the similarity ends there. In addition to having been a combat officer, Senator, and Vice President, Truman read voraciously and studied history with a passion; Bush knew virtually nothing of history, geography, or foreign affairs when he began campaigning for the presidency. He still apparently reads little beyond the executive briefings prepared by his staff—making him their intellectual captive—and there is persuasive evidence that before 9/11 he did not even read those carefully.

LAWRENCE I. BONCHEK
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Those who undertake "to set . . . [an] entire region on a course toward democratization" (as Norman Podhoretz describes President Bush's strategy) ought to do so with competence. If we expected Iraqis to wish to be as free and prosperous as we are, we should have also expected some of them to behave badly when, after the invasion, the regime they had been living under abruptly collapsed.

The problems that characteristically arise in an occupation were well known—but the important knowledge lay with institutions like the State Department, the CIA, the Army War College, the Council on Foreign Relations, all of them apparently held by the war-planners to be insufficiently right-wing. The refusal of the Bush administration to prepare properly for the occupation was a major and inexcusable failure of judgment. This war had political aims. Why was the realization of these aims so innocently taken for granted?

VIRGIL E. VICKERS
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz writes that in recent years, "American citizens continued to be injured or killed in Israel and other countries by terrorists who were not aiming specifically at the United States." But that is only part of the story.

There have been numerous attempts by Palestinian terrorists to murder Americans. According to *Newsweek*, Yasir Arafat's Fatah terror group was involved in the 1983 attack in Lebanon in which 241 Marines were massacred. Arafat's Force 17 terror unit claimed responsibility for an attempted car-bomb attack in 1985 against then-Secretary of State George Shultz during a visit to Jerusalem. Arafat's Fatah attempted a similar attack against Shultz in 1988. In January 2001, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—a member-organization of Arafat's PLO—carried out a grenade attack on the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem. More recently, Palestinian Arab terrorists ambushed a convoy of clearly marked U.S. diplomatic vehicles in Gaza in October 2003, murdering three American security personnel. According to the news agency Middle East Newsline and the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, Arafat himself gave the orders for the attack in order "to strike U.S. interests in Palestinian Authority areas."

In any event, U.S. law makes no distinction between American victims of terror who were targeted as Americans and those who were targeted for some other reason. In all such cases, American authorities are obligated to do everything they can to bring the killers here for prosecution and punishment. The fact that not one of the Palestinian Arabs involved in murdering over 100 Americans since the 1960's has been brought to the U.S. for trial is deeply disturbing. This would appear to be another example of the kind of appeasement that Mr. Podhoretz cites in his article as having contributed to the weakening of the West's effort against international terrorism.

MORTON A. KLEIN
Zionist Organization of America
Merion, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV" presents an impassioned, moving defense of the Iraq war, and the wide acclaim his essay has received testifies to its power. Yet the argument could be stronger. Key events of a decade ago are not well understood.

Above all, al Qaeda was *not* involved in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, as Mr. Podhoretz suggests. Osama bin Laden was not indicted for that attack in a U.S. criminal court. Nor is that attack among the military charges leveled against the al Qaeda detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Bin Laden was not indicted for a 1995 plot to bomb U.S. airplanes (a plot led by Ramzi Yousef, mastermind of the World Trade Center attack), although Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (who masterminded the 9/11 strikes) *was* indicted for that plot.

Mega-terrorism—starting with the first assault on the World Trade Center and culminating in 9/11—began *before* al Qaeda became involved in major attacks. Al Qaeda's participation in such assaults occurred only *after* bin Laden moved to Afghanistan, where Mohammed joined up with him.

The FBI in New York led the investigation into the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Its head, Jim Fox, believed Iraq was responsible. "Although we are unable to say with certainty that the Iraqis were behind the bombing," Fox wrote, "that is certainly the theory accepted by many of the veteran investigators."

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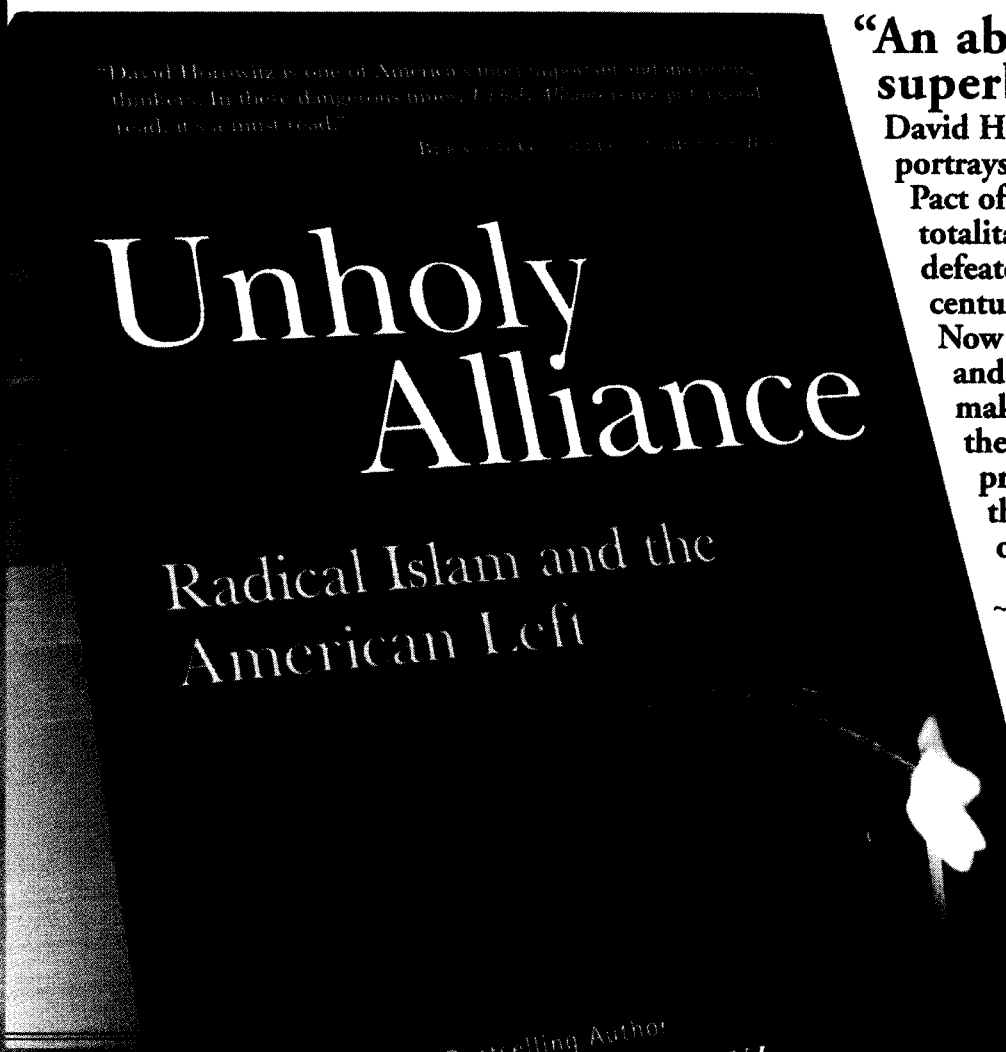
"THE INTERESTS OF MUSLIMS AND THE INTERESTS OF THE SOCIALISTS COINCIDE IN THE WAR AGAINST THE CRUSADERS."

~ Osama Bin Laden, February 14, 2003.



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Our default explanation for terrorism is al Qaeda. But what are al Qaeda's capabilities compared to those of a major terrorist state? The Iraq Survey Group has detailed the enormous size and complex organization of the Iraqi intelligence service, which trained a host of Arab parties in various skills, including explosives.

Documents emerging from Baghdad reveal Iraq's extensive dealings with numerous bad actors, including bin Laden. The White House has been unwilling to invest political capital to explain this, but it is the critical missing piece in understanding the Iraq war.

LAURIE MYLROIE
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Kudos to Norman Podhoretz for presenting a coherent and persuasive defense of George W. Bush's foreign policy. But Mr. Podhoretz's argument that the Islamic regime in Iran is now threatened because it is encircled by unfriendly governments in the Gulf states, the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, and the newly liberated Afghanistan and Iraq completely misses the mark. In fact, President Bush has removed two bitter enemies from Iran's borders—Saddam Hussein, with whom it fought a fierce eight-year war, and the Taliban, whose brand of Islam made them hostile to Iran. Thanks to the removal of these two concerns, Iran is now a regional superpower, bent on becoming a world superpower with the acquisition of a nuclear bomb.

SAM ROTHENBERG
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

In his vigorous defense of President Bush's conduct of "World War IV," Norman Podhoretz does not mention the single greatest failing of successive American administrations: their turning away from the attainment by Pakistan of the "Islamic bomb." Pakistani technology is now at work in Iran creating what is considered by most Israeli political and military figures the greatest threat to Israel's existence since 1948.

Despite certain warnings and cautionary statements, the Bush administration has no real plan for contending with, and stopping, the coming into being of a nuclear Iran. It is hard to imagine a more apocalyptic "World War IV" scenario.

SHALOM FREEDMAN
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz makes a valiant but failed attempt to justify the invasion of Iraq, which is a diversion from the real war on terror.

International terrorism, especially terrorism against the U.S., is primarily a Saudi phenomenon. Fifteen of the nineteen terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks were Saudis. Osama Bin Laden is a Saudi. The Taliban were composed primarily of Saudis. About 25 percent of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay are Saudis. Saudi money helps erect Wahabbist mosques and madrassas around the world that preach hatred. The Saudis distribute the great anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

If the U.S. were truly intent on fighting terrorism, we would have finished the war in Afghanistan and gone after Saudi Arabia.

SHELDON F. GOTTLIEB
Boynton Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Many thanks for Norman Podhoretz's lucid and persuasive essay on President Bush's ongoing effort to lead American foreign policy away from appeasement-besotted "realpolitik" and back toward the functional idealism embodied in the Marshall Plan.

Mr. Podhoretz's presentation is deeply flawed, however, by his astonishing omission of U.S.-Saudi relations. If our eagerness to accommodate a government so dramatically opposed to the democratic model is not an instance of realpolitik, what is?

MICHAEL STOKEN
Highland Park, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

As always, Norman Podhoretz makes an eloquent case, but it seems incomplete. Economics is crucial to the challenge we face, but not because of poverty in the Mideast. Rather, the prime source of our current troubles is the placing of vast riches in the hands of the wrong people. The Saudi, Iranian Shiite, and (former) Iraqi Baathist regimes are the legatees of British and, later, American oil policy.

When King Faisal imposed the oil embargo during the Yom Kippur war in October 1973, the U.S. (and Europe) should have explained to the Saudis and other oil-state rulers that we did not vastly enrich them, educate their sons, and protect their regimes so that they could use our oil dependence to blackmail us or to extract excess economic rents, let alone to invest in terror. Instead we caved. And thus the foundation was laid for a vast financial oil-state surplus, whose proceeds would mostly be invested (apart from sybaritic indulgence) in armaments, WMD programs, extremist versions of Islam, and support for terrorism (part of it willing, part of it protection money).

JOHN C. WOHLSTETTER
Discovery Institute
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

The only thing I would question about Norman Podhoretz's well-timed article is the last part of his subtitle. I do not think World War IV can ever finally be "won" because the terrorists will never stop what they are doing. The best we can do is to fight them wherever and whenever they strike.

PATRICIA MEYEROWITZ
Easton, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV" is a solid contribution. I wonder, however, about the notion of inducing Middle Eastern clerics to emulate the Protestant Reformation. Have we forgotten the fierce civil wars that the Reformation unleashed for centuries, still going on in Northern Ireland? Besides, reformed religion, like modernity generally, has produced some dreadful results (evident in families and child-raising) along with various gains.

To my mind, Samuel Huntington's vision of a "clash of civilizations" (really, cultures) is more persuasive than Francis Fukuyama's shallow universal perspective, which is as woodenly rationalistic as Hegel's "recognition of all by all." Like Woodrow Wilson before him, President Bush has gotten carried away here by a sentimental and all-too-human political impulse.

None of this alters my admiration for Norman Pod-

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horetz and his superb tract. No one, to my knowledge, has defined better where we are and ought to go.

ROBERT G. COHN
Menlo Park, California

TO THE EDITOR:

There is much to recommend in Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV," but he fails to see the lack of militancy that may well doom the application of the Bush Doctrine. In World War II, there was a clear attitude that we had to defeat the enemy and its poisonous ideology. In World War IV, by contrast, we are guided by political correctness, and are quick to emphasize that Arabs are not our enemy and that, as President Bush declared, "Islam means peace." Rather than defeating our enemies and calling for their unconditional surrender, we try to win their "hearts and minds." The U.S. did not raze Falluja in April of this year but bowed to Arab sensitivities, sacrificing American lives, victory, and morale instead.

A related problem is the aim of converting the Arab-Muslim nations to democracy. Mr. Podhoretz argues that this is as feasible as it was for Germany and Japan. But Arab nations have no heritage of anything resembling individual rights, as the Weimar Republic did, nor any openness to modernity, as Japan did. Even if they did, consider by analogy the idea of prosecuting World War II by declaring that "fascism means peace" and that that we need not vanquish the primary Axis nations. Our defeat would have been assured.

ALLEN WEINGARTEN
Morris Township, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

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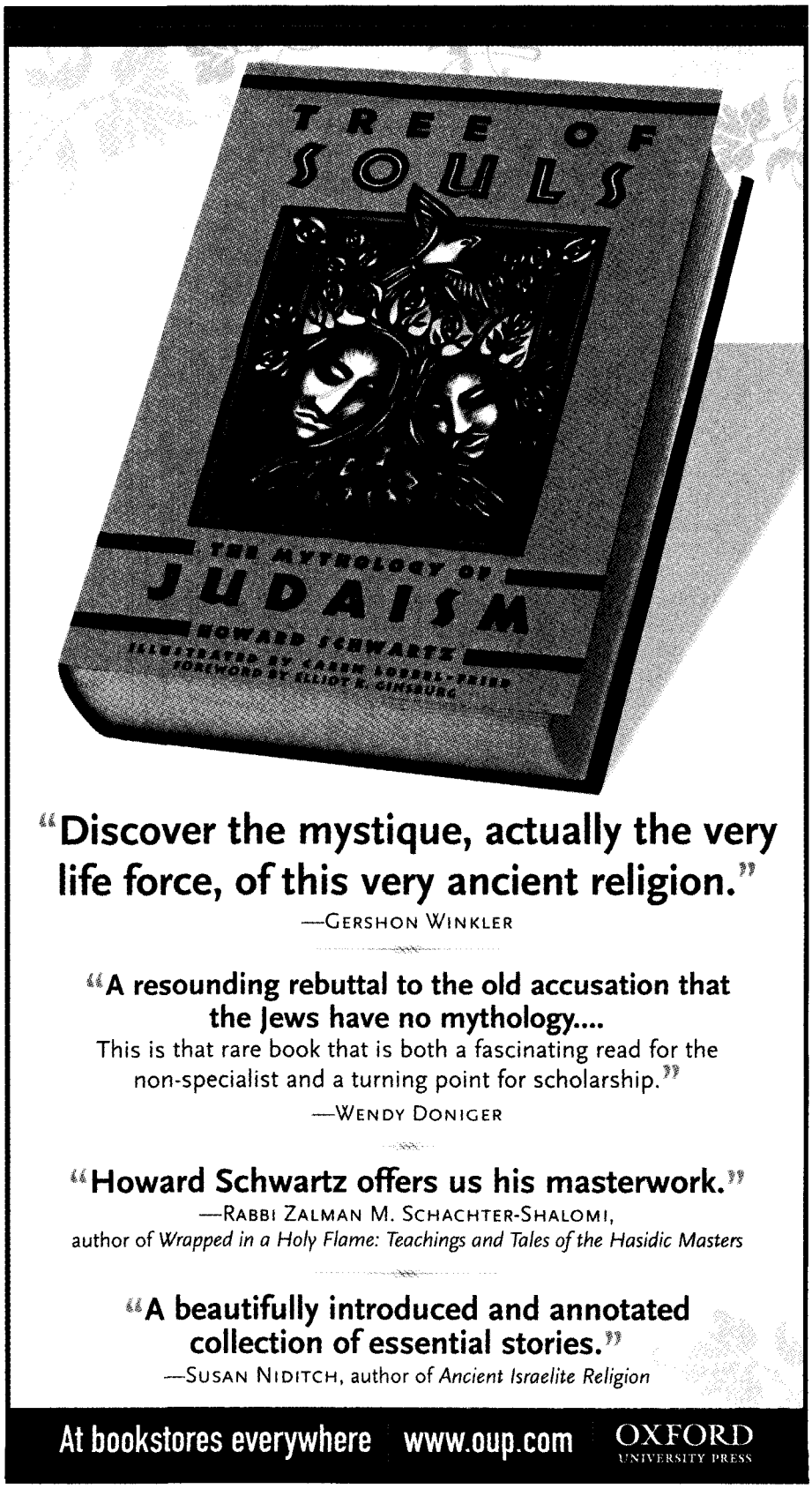
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the fine article by Norman Podhoretz. Mr. Podhoretz is always worth reading; here he has outdone himself. I agree that the only "safe" course for the United States is to grasp the nettle. In the end, however, I take issue with Mr. Podhoretz. I think he is the prisoner of his hopes, not the historian of reality.

It is true, as he writes, that "the most decisive question" is whether we will cut and run, or "hang in long enough to carry World War IV to a . . . successful conclusion." But even Mr. Podhoretz admits that he has only prayer to fall back on if John Kerry wins the presidency. I suspect that those prayers will not be enough.

As for the Bush Doctrine, I would ask again a question I posed to Mr. Podhoretz in a letter almost exactly two years ago.

> A "doctrine" is just a collection of words. It is true that words themselves have some effect, but to translate the words into deeds takes will. It may have been comforting to the descendants of Regulus to hear the same three words at the end of each speech of Cato to the Senate, regardless of the subject, but the Punic conflict did not end until the sack of Carthage. . . .

Like Mr. Podhoretz, I also have high hopes for a doctrine which recognizes evil when it sees it, rejects moral relativism, holds states and individuals responsible for the terrorists they sponsor, will not bind itself always to wait to be attacked first, and includes the Israeli response to terror with our own. But I wish I were as sure as he seems to be that when push comes to shove the words will turn into deeds.

The last two years have simply reinforced my fears. Just as Mr. Podhoretz prays that he is wrong about Kerry, so I pray that I am wrong about Bush. But I do not believe I am.

RICHARD DURANT
Grosse Point, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz makes a persuasive case that we are now in the midst of World War IV. I was surprised, however, that he did not suggest any strategies to deal with the aspects of this war that make it so different from the prior three. The main differences today are: the involvement of religious officials, the special tactics of terrorism, and the apparent insulation of states from suffering any consequences for actions they take (or fail to take) that provide havens for terrorists.

I would suggest a new doctrine along the following lines. First, holy sites should lose their protected status if they are used for purposes like inciting violence or harboring terrorists and their weapons. Once sites lose their status as "holy," they would no longer be exempt from counterattack.

Furthermore, terrorists are not born as terrorists. Every element contributing to their creation is in the control of some state. These include such things as the contents of schoolbooks, messages in state-controlled media, border security, and the permissibility of terrorist incitement and training.

It should no longer be acceptable for a nation to foster or permit acts leading to the creation of terrorists. Failure to provide economic compensation for the damage done by terrorists should result in a response designed to cause equal or greater damage to the people and assets of the culpable country.

PHILIP A. KORN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR

Although the great bulk of Norman Podhoretz's analysis is sound, he may be too quick to declare the onset of World War IV. There is no doubt that Osama bin Laden, the mullahs, and other jihadists are at war with us, and that they are trying to get all of Islam behind them; but they have not yet succeeded.

I would argue that the battle now is to convince Muslims that an all-out war would be disastrous for Islam, and that they should therefore withhold support from the jihadists. This can be done by using U.S. political and military power to compel Arab governments to stop supporting terrorists, and by encouraging the Iranian population to remove the mullahs.

It is still feasible for the U.S. to be so successful that the majority of Muslims will conclude that Allah did not intend for there to be jihad against the West in this generation. World War IV would be averted or at least postponed. On the other hand, if we fail in the next few years, we may be in for a much greater war than any we have seen.

MAX SINGER
Jerusalem, Israel

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Having already delivered myself of 30,000 words on this subject—in the course of which most of the objections raised in the letters below were anticipated and answered to the best of my ability—I will now be brief in responding to my critics one by one. Before doing so, however, I want to thank all those who prefaced their criticisms with kind remarks about the article as a whole.

Eric Chenoweth's letter contains nothing that has not been harped upon innumerable times by reactionary realists on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. These people are dead set against the Bush Doctrine precisely because it proceeds from the recognition that 9/11 exposed the obsolescence of the ideas they have desperately been striving to salvage (hence my use of the term "reactionary"), and in joining their company Mr. Chenoweth takes another turn around the same old beaten path. But if he adds nothing of substance to these bankrupt ideas, he does infuse them with a novel delusion in claiming that they can be squared with "America's capacity to carry out its great mission of safeguarding liberty and fostering freedom." Alas, poor Eric; I knew him when the organization for which he works fought the good fight to liberate the Soviet empire from Communism. Now, even while advocating retreat from an analogous battle to liberate the Middle East from Islamofascism, he imagines that he still stands where he stood in World War III. Yet, if you ask me, he has forfeited the right to even so much as a toehold on the moral and political high ground from which this country has undertaken to safeguard itself by safeguarding liberty and fostering freedom.

Anthony Rimell has me two-thirds wrong. I do not dismiss him as "stupid" or "arrogant," though I certainly do consider him "uninformed" in asserting that there was "no legal or moral basis" for going into Iraq and

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that the outcome has been a disaster. Since he was unpersuaded by the detailed arguments on these matters that I advanced in my article, I doubt that repeating them here in summary form would serve any useful purpose.

Bob Winners wants to know if the preemption pillar of the Bush Doctrine has made the world a safer place. The answer is yes.

As Wayne Seibert would see if he took another look at my article, I dealt at some length with the question of what "our current political culture" is willing to support. But, contrary to what Mr. Seibert contends, very few realist critics of the Bush Doctrine have paid much, if any, attention to that question, and most of them have indeed raised grave doubts about the possibility of doing unto Iraq what we did unto Germany and Japan after 1945.

Robert Kadoori is right about the importance of the battle of Iraq. That is why it is necessary to fight against all those who have themselves been fighting against what we set out to do there about two years ago.

A favorite charge of these opponents, parroted here by Lawrence I. Bonchek, is that the invasion of Iraq was a "diversion." But as I tried to show in my article, our enemy in this war is a two-headed monster—one with a religious face and one with a secular face. I also spent a great deal of time trying to show why it was, and is, sound strategy to go after the latter in Iraq after having successfully taken on the former in Afghanistan. George W. Bush may not be so great a reader of history as Harry S. Truman was, but exactly like Truman before him, he had the wit and the courage not only to recognize a gathering threat but the intellectual wherewithal to adopt a strategy for dealing with it.

Virgil E. Vickers credits the CIA, etc. with having accurately foreseen what would follow from an invasion of Iraq, and he accuses the Bush administration of refusing (not merely failing, mind you, but *refusing*) "to prepare properly for the occupation." But as has been richly documented by Michael R. Gordon in, of all places, the generally anti-Bush and antiwar *New York Times*, and as should have been taken for granted all along, it was on the basis of the intelligence provided by the CIA that the war planners developed their plans, that the generals then adopted their tactics, and that everyone's expectations were shaped. I would also note that none of the disasters that had reasonably been anticipated and for which preparations had in fact been made—oil fields set afire, civil war, hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the country—ever occurred.

Morton A. Klein has good grounds for describing the treatment of Arafat by previous administrations as "appeasement" (though that may not be the most precise characterization). But surely no such charge can be lodged against George W. Bush, who has refused to treat with Arafat at all.

Laurie Mylroie takes issue with my suggestion (derived from what the then CIA director R. James Woolsey thought at the time) that al Qaeda was involved in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. She also faults me for what she evidently regards as my neglect of state support. But here is what I wrote: "In 1993, Clinton . . . refused even to meet with his own CIA director. Perhaps he anticipated that

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he would be told things by Woolsey—about terrorist networks *and the states sponsoring them* [emphasis added]—that he did not wish to hear because he had no intention of embarking on the military action that such knowledge might force upon him." As for the complicity of Iraq in particular in this and other terrorist attacks, I would be only too happy if Laurie Mylroie should win her longstanding battle to establish that complicity beyond a reasonable doubt.

Sam Rothenberg is worried about Iran, and so am I. Yet unlike Mr. Rothenberg, the Iranian mullocrats themselves do not feel that the removal of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein has been good for them. If they did, they would not be working so hard to frustrate the progress of democracy in those two countries.

Shalom Freedman is also rightly worried about Iran's development of a nuclear arsenal. But what can we do about this? I for one place next to no faith in diplomacy. My great hope, however, is that we will intensify efforts (which I assume are already under way) to encourage an uprising by the internal opposition that would lead to the overthrow of the mullocracy, the eventual democratization of the country, and its renunciation of nuclear weapons. Otherwise, military action may become the only option.

Sheldon F. Gottlieb, Michael Stoken, and John Wohlstetter, for their part, are worried—and again rightly—about Saudi Arabia. To which I say: all in good time (provided that the Bush Doctrine remains in force). Indeed, as I have repeatedly asserted, a victorious conclusion to World War IV will mean regime changes—by peaceful means where possible, by force where necessary—in all the despotisms of the greater Middle East, emphatically including Saudi Arabia. Only in this way can we "drain the swamps" in which terrorism breeds and rob it of the sanctuaries and support without which it cannot survive. (Patricia Meyerowitz, please take note.)

Robert G. Cohn and Allen Weingarten, like many other observers, are confident that such a strategy is futile because the culture of the Arab-Muslim world is incompatible with democracy. For all the reasons I spelled out in the concluding sections of "World War IV," I disagree.

Richard Durant seems to think that the Bush Doctrine has not been translated from words into deeds. Tell that to the Taliban and Saddam Hussein.

Philip A. Korn similarly seems to think that the Bush Doctrine does not target states that foster or sponsor terrorism. But (see the section of my article entitled "The Second Pillar") that is exactly what the Bush Doctrine does. Not that it would necessarily be a bad idea to incorporate one or more of Mr. Korn's codicils.

Max Singer wants us to convince the Muslim world that it should not support the jihadists. I have no objection to such a campaign, but I see it as one of the many different weapons to be deployed in the war we began fighting on 9/11, not as an alternative to that war.

Finally, for the interesting points they make, and for their extraordinarily generous words, I am grateful to Mayor Koch, John Swails, Allan Erickson, Randall L. Kleinman, Louis-Vincent Gave, Dwight Stedman, Jenene Stookesberry, Father Oakes, M. Donald Coleman, Dennis Travis, and Geert Vandenweghe—as well as to the hundreds of readers who have contacted me directly or have posted equally generous responses to my article on the Internet.

Editor's note: *Reprints of Norman Podhoretz's article can be purchased at $4.95 per copy (including shipping in the continental U.S.). To order, and to inquire about bulk rates, please contact service@commentarymagazine.com or call (800) 829-6270.*

American Indians

TO THE EDITOR:

Guenter Lewy is right on the whole to say that the European decimation of North American Indian societies was not genocide, but I must make it clear that in my book, *Conquest of Paradise* (1990), which Mr. Lewy cites, I never suggested such a thing ["Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?," September].

My discussion of the policy of the English in particular was based on their recurrent descriptions of Indians as subhuman—generally "beastly" and "savage," "more brutish than the beasts they hunt," those who "in order to make them Christians . . . must first be made men." And I pointed out that for the English this meant that Indians, like wild beasts anywhere, would either be fenced in and confined to parks and reservations, broken and tamed, scattered to distant lands (with bounties on those who came back), or hunted down and exterminated.

It is this last element of English policy that occasionally gives off a whiff of genocide. There certainly were examples of great atrocity-filled campaigns against Indians held to be hostile or in possession of wanted lands. The very first war, against the Powhatan Indians of Virginia, was launched by Lord De La Warr in 1610 to get chiefs "to acknowledge no other lord but King James" and to provide regular tributes of corn, skins, and forced laborers for the colonists. If there was resistance, the soldiers were to kidnap the chiefs and their children and educate them "in [our] manners and religion" so that they would "become in time civil and Christian." It began with a band of soldiers setting on the village of Kecoughtan who "put five to the sword, wounded many others," "put to flight . . . the rest of the savages," burned the village, and destroyed the cornfields. This was followed by bloody and cruel war for the next four years.

But it is hard to find in this and similar campaigns a fixed "intent to destroy" the Virginia tribes "as such," or the race of Indians as a "whole" or even, except in battlefield situations, "in part." A concerted campaign to eradicate the Indians from the continent would have been too vast and difficult an undertaking for the English even to entertain or formulate—and not really necessary, since there were other prongs of their Indian policies to secure their settlement.

I do think, though, that the question of historical genocide is something of a red herring, an academic legal exercise. The real point is to recognize the blood-soaked violence and imperial racism that infected the core of the European settlers in the Americas, whether or

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not their actions rose to the level of some concept developed out of the punishment of Nazi Germany.

KIRKPATRICK SALE
Cold Spring, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Guenter Lewy states that "the sad fate of America's Indians represents not a crime but a tragedy, involving an irreconcilable collision of cultures and values." As the conclusion to a fairly sober-minded article, there is something startlingly disturbing about the moral obtuseness of this statement. Mr. Lewy insinuates that there was no one to blame in the dispossession of the Indians from their lands and in the decline of their civilization.

The American government made moral choices in its policies regarding American Indians. These were tragic in that they were based on racism, selfishness, and an arrogant and unreflective manner toward Indians that did not take into account their human rights and their individual and collective needs. The current state of social and economic marginalization in which many American Indians live is a direct result of those choices and policies. Mr. Lewy's subtle attempt to blame the victim for the actions of the aggressor is intellectually and morally dishonest.

There may have been no officially stated policy aimed at eradicating the Indians, but the effect of hundreds of different policies across the United States amounted to a full-scale assault on the culture and human rights of American Indians. Genocide can take place without a single shot being fired. Destroying a nation, a community, and a culture is a psychological and a social process, as well as a physical one. In his study of Sioux culture, Erik Erikson wrote:

> The Sioux, under traumatic conditions, has lost the reality for which the last historical form of his communal integrity was fitted. . . . Step by step the Sioux has been denied the bases for collective identity formation and with it that reservoir of collective integrity from which the individual must derive his stature as a social being.

The American government forcibly assimilated Sioux children and taught them that their culture and identity were primitive and without value and dignity.

Mr. Lewy has used smoke and mirrors to shroud, and make more acceptable, the painful and brutal truths of American history.

NOAM SCHIMMEL
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

At what point did Guenter Lewy's "Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?" stop reading like historical analysis and begin sounding like a series of justifications and absolutions for horrible misdeeds? For me, it was somewhere between the surprising opening gambit on how many actually died (maybe only a million, not so bad) and the argument that accounts of American troops actively spreading smallpox were "debatable," despite Mr. Lewy's citation of official sources confirming these events. As he continues his breezy, understated apologia through two centuries of Native-American history—the soldiers at Sand Creek and elsewhere in the West showed a "lamentable deficiency in discipline," he tells us—one wonders whether Mr. Lewy even means for us to take him seriously.

J. MCDERMOTT
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR:

Guenter Lewy's challenge to one of the pillars of political correctness, the supposed genocide of the "first Americans," and COMMENTARY's courage in publishing it are quite admirable. But Mr. Lewy omits an argument that would strengthen his case.

Disease and armed conflict with Europeans were not the only major factors contributing to the decline of the Native-American population. Another was internecine warfare between the Indian tribes themselves. Our history is replete with stories of one tribe virtually wiping out another, and of continual conflict among the great federations of tribes like the Iroquois Nation, the Chippewa, the Cherokee, and the Sioux. Ironically, the Indian leaders most honored in American history are those like Tecumseh, Pontiac, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse who overcame intertribal conflicts sufficiently to form alliances powerful enough to halt and even drive back westward-moving pioneers. That they were finally unsuccessful speaks volumes as to the depth of intertribal hostilities.

TOM RATH
Pasadena, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Guenter Lewy's superb essay on the radical interpreters of the American-Indian catastrophe only begins to plumb the depths of their dishonesty. Straining against the fact that the huge majority of the Indians were victims of disease rather than massacre, pseudo-scholars such as David E. Stannard and Ward Churchill have attempted to make their case by falsifying the history of the Holocaust.

In his notorious 1996 essay, "Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship," Stannard wrote that millions of Jewish deaths during the Holocaust were attributable to "the same so-called natural phenomena . . . that were also the immediate cause of death for many of the Americas' indigenous people." He maintains that "fully half the Jewish victims of the Holocaust . . . died from disease and destitution," and not from gassing or shooting. He adds that Jewish historians who distinguish the American founding from the Final Solution are motivated by a theology of "chosenness" involving "the maintenance of blood purity" and by the need to justify the "territorial expansionism" of their "theocratic state," Israel.

In his book, *A Little Matter of Genocide* (1997), Ward Churchill asserts that the murder of Europe's Jews was never a "fixed policy objective" for the Nazis. Instead, he discovers "a rather erratic and contradictory hodgepodge of anti-Jewish policies." He claims that Jewish academics are engaged in a conspiracy to suppress all other historical instances of genocide, including that of the American Indians. He accuses these "Holocaust exclusivists" of seeking to maintain "the privileged political status of Israel," to reinforce "Judaism's theological belief in itself as comprising a 'special' or 'chosen' people," and to conceal "Israel's ongoing genocide" against Arabs.

In the light of these statements, it may be necessary to warn of a convergence between certain forms of radical left-wing "scholarship"

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and the views of far-right Holocaust deniers.

PAUL BOGDANOR
London, England

TO THE EDITOR:

I appreciate Guenter Lewy's article pointing out the anachronistic fallacies and imprecision involved in imputing genocidal intent to the Europeans who explored and settled in North America over the course of four centuries. But Mr. Lewy errs regarding the 1868 Battle of the Washita, in which Custer's 7th Regiment surprised Black Kettle's largely peaceable band of Cheyenne. The battle site is a mile west of the present-day town of Cheyenne in west-central Oklahoma, not Kansas.

JOHN R. TRAFFAS
Wichita, Kansas

GUENTER LEWY writes:

One of the purposes of my essay was to provide context for what Kirkpatrick Sale calls "the blood-soaked violence and imperial racism" often practiced by European settlers. The widespread pattern of Indian-hating on the frontier was, in large measure, a result of the Indians' brutal mode of warfare, which included the killing of captured women and children and the infliction of grisly tortures on prisoners that put the medieval Inquisition to shame. There is nothing wrong, I submit, with calling these practices "beastly" and "savage." The extreme cruelty with which most Indian tribes treated their captives does not excuse the massacres that we know to have taken place, but it helps us understand why they occurred.

Pace Mr. Sale, a critical discussion of the alleged genocide against native Americans is not just "an academic legal exercise" or "something of a red herring." The notion that the United States is guilty of genocide against the Indians has gained wide currency in Western Europe, where it helps fuel anti-Americanism. In this country, too, as I tried to demonstrate, the charge is hardly limited to figures on the fringe of the academic profession like Ward Churchill and David E. Stannard. To his credit, W. Richard West has seen to it that the new National Museum of the American Indian, which he directs, is not an Indian Holocaust Museum. But as West explained in an interview in the *Washington Post* on September 13, he made this decision so as not to let tragedies and horrors overwhelm the message of Indian survival. That is why, he said, the displays "don't wallow in the genocide, broken promises, and bloody wars of the 19th century." West, too, it appears, considers the genocide of the Indians a historical fact.

Noam Schimmel regards my essay as morally obtuse because I call the sad fate of the Indians a tragedy rather than a crime, and because I speak of "an irreconcilable collision of cultures and values." The dispossession of the Indians from their lands did indeed often involve profit-hungry speculators and broken treaties, and for these it is appropriate to assign blame; but it remains true that, seen as a whole, the westward movement was as unstoppable as other great population movements of the past. For considerations of space I did not dwell on federal policies that involved the destruction of Indian cultures and tribal structures, but there are other good reasons not to include these efforts at forced acculturation in a discussion of genocide. Not only did the United Nations committee preparing the Genocide Convention quite deliberately omit the term "cultural genocide" from the final definition, but the use of this concept wrongly equates cultural intolerance with physical extermination. To suggest that "genocide can take place without a single shot being fired" dilutes and distorts the meaning of the term.

J. McDermott has me citing "official sources" confirming the charge that American troops actively spread smallpox; I do not find any such sources in my article. The accusation of biological warfare, allegedly carried out by the U.S. Army against the Mandans, remains a canard unsubstantiated by a shred of reliable historical evidence.

I thank Tom Rath for drawing attention to the destructive consequences of intertribal warfare. The historian Richard White has suggested that more Indians lost their lives in such fighting than were killed in warfare with whites. I also welcome Paul Bogdanor's informative discussion of the falsification of the history of the Holocaust by David E. Stannard and Ward Churchill. Lastly, I acknowledge my deficient knowledge of American geography, which, as John R. Traffas points out, made me place the battle of the Washita in Kansas rather than in Oklahoma.

Physics & Finance

TO THE EDITOR:

Jeremy Bernstein's "The Einsteins of Wall Street" [September] gives a dramatic account of the mismatch between the theories of quantitative finance and the achievements of those theories in practice. My book *My Life as a Quant*, which Mr. Bernstein refers to, was written in part to explain the limited (but not negligible) efficacy of the techniques of theoretical physics in finance.

When I started working on Wall Street twenty years ago after a career as a theoretical physicist, I simply assumed it made sense to apply the techniques of physics to financial modeling. Why should differential calculus and Fourier series not be as appropriate for describing the movements of stocks and yield curves as they are for particles and electromagnetic fields?

After several years in the hurly-burly world of securities trading, my naiveté faded. In physics, a model can come so close to describing reality as to be almost indistinguishable from it. In economics, any model is merely a toy. Physics is not "better"; finance is simply harder. In physics you are playing against God, Who does not change His laws very often. In finance you are playing against God's creatures, who value assets based on their ephemeral opinions. A financial theorist is ultimately trying to represent how people think.

Still, financial models can be useful. I like to think of them as analogues of the *gedanken* (thought) experiments used by physicists in the early part of the 20th century. These were imaginary investigations, a sort of mental stress-testing of the physical world, conducted in one's head because they were too difficult to do in practice. Their aim was to force a conceptual picture of the world into a contradiction. Einstein

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imagined what he would see while sitting on the edge of a moving light beam in order to gain insight into the contradictions between the Newtonian description of matter and Maxwell's description of light.

In this spirit, financial models should be viewed as a collection of parallel thought universes you can explore. Each individual universe should be consistent, but the world of finance and people, unlike the world of matter, is infinitely more complex than any model you make.

The appropriate way to engage with a model is with an initial dose of hubris: temporarily suspending disbelief and pushing the model as far as possible. But then, you must remember that you are only theorizing. Catastrophe strikes when theories take on a life of their own and hubris evolves into idolatry.

EMANUEL DERMAN
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I hope COMMENTARY's readers came away from Jeremy Bernstein's article with a better appreciation for what all those articles about "risky derivatives" are about; derivatives are sufficiently important to modern finance that greater public understanding is certainly desirable. But I am a bit disappointed that Mr. Bernstein focused on derivatives modeling as the cause of the collapse of Long Term Capital Management (LTCM). The LTCM debacle was fundamentally about a failure of risk-management. As such, it was a cultural failure rather than a scientific one.

Pricing models do not tell the "true" value of a derivative instrument. What they *do is transform the problem* of pricing into the problem of predicting a factor that determines pricing.

Based on the assumption that, in ordinary market conditions, stock-price returns form a normal distribution, the Black-Scholes formula reduces the price of a stock option to a variety of observable and hedgeable factors (stock price, prevailing interest rate, etc.) plus one unobservable and—except with another stock option—unhedgeable factor: future stock volatility.

But isolating this factor is not the same as knowing its value. The market's estimate of future volatility can be as erratic and as wrong as its estimate of anything else. The estimate of future volatility as implied by option prices can fluctuate as much as stock prices themselves.

Everyone at LTCM certainly understood this, and the company did not lose vast amounts of money because it mis-modeled securities—something other dealers have done, at a steep cost. Rather, the problem for the team at LTCM was managing risk. They did not rigorously stress-test their positions, which might have helped them anticipate that all their positions could go against them at once in a distressed market.

And they ignored their own impact on the market. Other market participants knew LTCM's reputation and also something of its strategy. Many went after the same trades, attempting to piggyback on LTCM's vaunted genius. LTCM should have realized that, if it were ever squeezed and forced to sell, few others would have an appetite for taking on its losing positions.

None of this relates to whether derivatives modeling is a good or bad approximation of the real world. If LTCM had had independent, professional risk-management, it could have used the same models to identify trades but without running such an extraordinary amount of risk in executing them.

Two other points are worth airing. Mr. Bernstein mentions in passing that there have been proposals to regulate hedge funds and derivatives, but he does not give any details about these proposals or weigh their potential effects. Lack of transparency in the derivatives market was a major contributor to the LTCM catastrophe. To some extent the market has self-regulated to solve this problem, but it is worth further discussion.

Finally, Mr. Bernstein asserts that LTCM's collapse was more serious than Enron's or WorldCom's in terms of its impact on the financial system. I cannot agree. LTCM triggered a panic, but it was quickly quelled, leaving no lasting damage. Alan Greenspan did just what J.P. Morgan did in the panic of 1907: he got the major players together and brokered a deal that ended the crisis. The system was fully able to absorb LTCM's losses, once everyone was secure that he alone would not be left holding the bag.

By contrast, Enron and WorldCom did major harm to the American economy. After seeing the amazing gains Enron and WorldCom were making by trading subsidiaries and investing heavily in broadband and other next-generation telecom services, other companies began to emulate them—and did so with borrowed money.

When it came out that both companies were towering frauds and not making any money at all, not only were the direct losses from their bankruptcies bigger than the losses sustained by LTCM, but the revelation that many other utilities and telecom companies had business models that were built on fraud triggered numerous bankruptcies and near-bankruptcies.

NOAH MILLMAN
Brooklyn, New York

JEREMY BERNSTEIN writes:

I appreciate Emanuel Derman's letter, written with the same grace and clarity as his book. Noah Millman's thoughtful argument deserves a response by other financial experts and not by a theoretical physicist. In reading about the LTCM disaster, I, at least, was struck by how close a call it was. Others might have the impression that Alan Greenspan was some sort of philosophical Svengali who got the disparate parties to reason together; to me, it seemed more like herding pigs at a trough. Only at the last minute was a deal brokered that kept the entire marketing system from collapsing. Common sense tells me that these funds should be regulated.

Let me enter a correction and an addendum to what I wrote in COMMENTARY. The correction: my meeting with Myron Scholes happened as I said it happened, but not when; in reconstructing the occasion, I confounded some dates. The addendum: the first person to do the sort of financial engineering that formed the subject of my essay was a French mathematician named Louis Bachelier, in the faraway year of 1900(!). I have explored Bachelier's work in an article to be published elsewhere.

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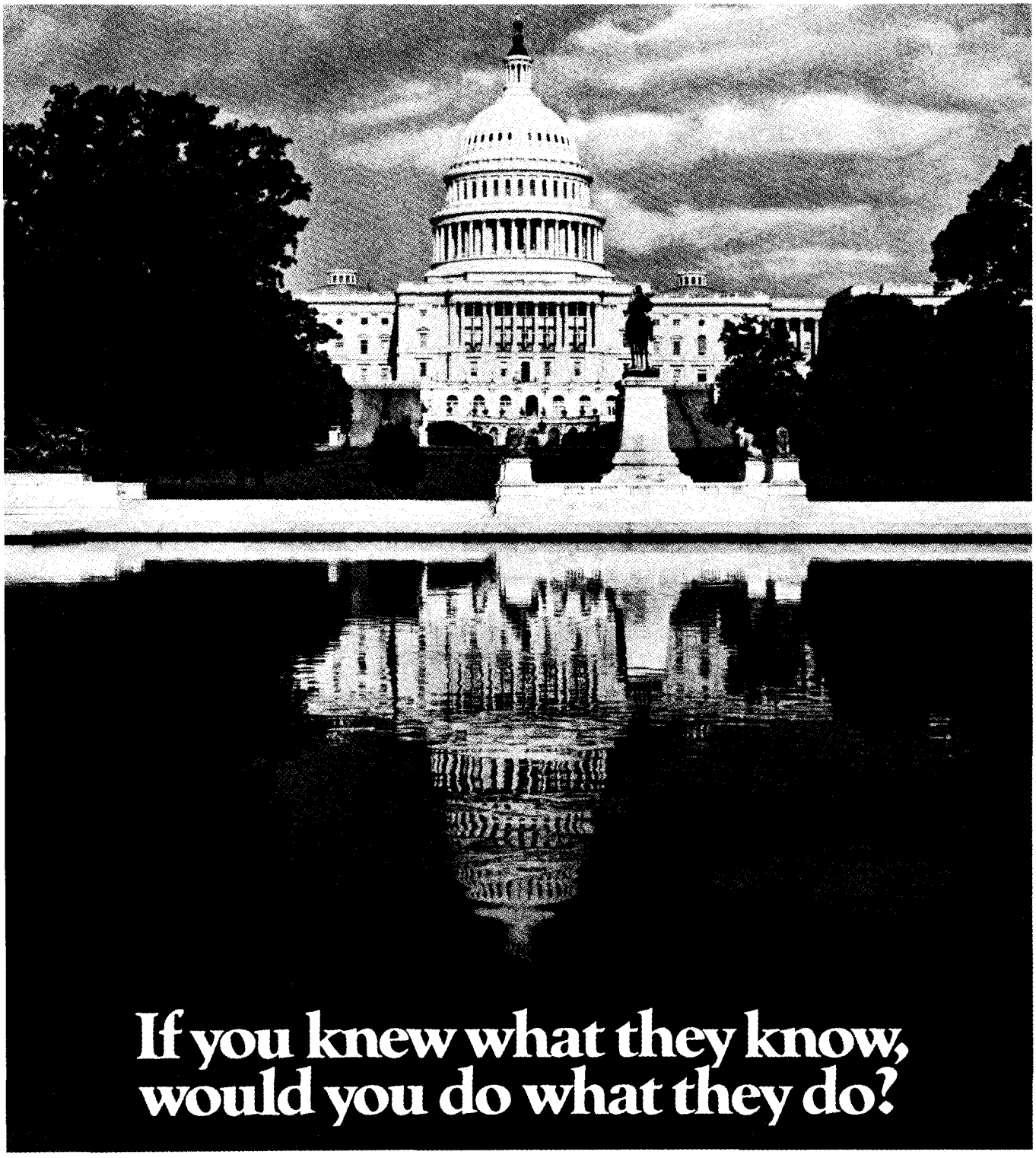

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Commentary
December 2004

Islam and Freedom

James Q. Wilson

WHAT ARE the prospects for the emergence of liberal societies in Muslim countries? Note my choice of words: "liberal," not "democratic." Democracy, defined as competitive elections among rival slates of candidates, is much harder to find in the world than liberalism, defined as a decent respect for the freedom and autonomy of individuals. There are more Muslim nations—indeed, more nations of any stripe—that provide a reasonable level of freedom than ones that provide democracy in anything like the American or British versions.

Freedom—that is, liberalism—is more important than democracy because freedom produces human opportunity. In the long run, however, democracy is essential to freedom, because no political regime will long maintain the freedoms it has provided if it has an ironclad grip on power. Culture and constitutions can produce freedom; democracy safeguards and expands it.

This is what lies at the heart of our efforts to make Afghanistan and Iraq into liberal states. Some on both the Left and the Right think it impossible to introduce democracy into the Muslim Middle East. One left-wing politician has condemned the effort as "gunpoint democracy"; a well-known leftist academic has pronounced it a "fantasy"; to a conservative journalist, open electoral systems in the Muslim world will only stimulate a competition among demagogues to see who can be the most anti-American. When it comes to Iraq, the columnist George F. Will has asserted that the country lacks both democratic citizens and a democratic culture, to say nothing of lacking George Washington, James Madison, and John Marshall. Even to hope for a "liberal" regime there, he argues, is like hoping in 1917 that the socialist leader Alexander Kerensky might continue to rule Russia after Lenin and the Bolsheviks arrived.

There are certainly grounds for pessimism. For centuries, only Great Britain and its former colonies—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—could be called democratic. And even in those countries, the struggle to acquire both liberal and democratic values had been a long and hard one. It took half a millennium before England moved from the signing of Magna Carta to the achievement of parliamentary supremacy; three centuries after Magna Carta, Catholics were being burned at the stake. The United States was a British colony for two centuries, and less than a century after its independence was split by a frightful civil war. Elsewhere, Portugal and Spain became reasonably free only late in the 20th century, and in Latin America many societies have never even achieved the stage of liberalism. The late Daniel Patrick Moynihan once remarked that, of

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all the states in existence in the world in 1914, only eight would escape a violent change of government between then and the early 1990's.

Nevertheless, liberal regimes have been less uncommon than democratic ones. In 1914 there were three democracies in Europe, but many more countries where your neck would be reasonably safe from the heel of government. You might not have wished to live in Germany, but Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, and Sweden offered reasonably attractive alternatives even if few of them could then have been called democracies in the modern American or British sense.

As for the Middle East, there have been only three democracies in its history: Lebanon, Turkey, and of course Israel. Israel remains free and democratic despite being besieged by enemies. But of the two Muslim nations, only one, Turkey, became reasonably democratic after a 50-year effort, while Lebanon, which has been liberal and democratic on some occasions and not on others, is today a satellite of Syria and the home of anti-Israel and anti-Western terrorists; Freedom House ranks it as "not free."

Is the matter as universally hopeless as this picture might suggest? Suppose, as a freedom-loving individual, you had to live in a Muslim nation somewhere in the world. You would assuredly not pick Baathist Syria or theocratic Iran or Saddam's Iraq. But you might pick Turkey, or Indonesia, or Morocco. In what follows, I want to explore what makes those three countries different, and what the difference might mean for the future.

TURKEY IS the first, the best known, and almost the only democratic secular state in the world with an overwhelmingly Muslim population. It was created in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, who had become a hero by expelling the Greeks from the western part of his country after World War I.

By Atatürk's time, Muslim thinkers and leaders everywhere had been struggling for centuries to find a solution to the catastrophic collapse of the Islamic world. Once the greatest empire ever known, with a remarkable record of military victories and cultural achievements to its name, Islam had been expelled from Spain in 1492; two centuries later, the temporarily resurgent forces of the Ottomans were defeated decisively at the gates of Vienna. The Ottoman holding of Egypt had been easily captured, first by the French and then by the English.

In the early 20th century, many who still dreamed of restoring Islam's power thought the answer lay in acquiring Western arms and Western technologies. Atatürk had a different view. It was necessary, he believed, for a Muslim nation to do more than buy Western products; it must *become* Western. For him this chiefly meant turning to the principles of democracy and the teachings of science.

Speaking privately to a friend, Atatürk once remarked that "I have no religion" and "at times I wish all religions at the bottom of the sea." As president of the Turkish Republic, he abolished the office of the Caliph and the Muslim religious courts, established a public-school system in which there would be no instruction in religion, legalized the sale of alcohol, gave to women the right to vote and to demand a divorce, instituted the compulsory use of the Latin alphabet, adopted a German commercial code, and allowed the selection of a Turkish beauty queen. Though for reasons of political prudence he allowed Turkey to be called an Islamic state, he revealed his true feelings on the matter when he converted Hagia Sofia, the great Byzantine cathedral turned Ottoman mosque, into a museum.

Atatürk favored democracy in principle but not much in practice. His followers dominated the government. Although at one point he decided there should be an opposition party, the experiment lasted only a few months before he ended it. But this is not to say that he was a dictator; instead, he was a tough ruler with a strong agenda, one who on occasion enforced that agenda by crushing dissidents and hanging their leaders, restricting press freedom, and closing down any organization or newspaper his government deemed subversive.

In 1945, seven years after Atatürk's death, opposition parties were again made legal in Turkey; within four years, some 27 had been formed. In 1950 Turkey saw the beginnings of democratic government, with the first free elections. Thanks to Atatürk, who had made the Turkish army subservient to civilian rule, the military did nothing to prevent this development. But the army was, and has remained, determined to protect Atatürk's secularism. Whenever some leader has veered too close to a religious orientation, the Turkish military has not hesitated to intervene, each time returning to barracks once the status quo ante has been restored.

The slow emergence of democracy has, however, led to modifications in the strict anti-religious stance established by Atatürk. In 1949, religious instruction was allowed on a voluntary basis. The year 2002 saw the first election of a party with a pro-Islamic leader who was not thereupon displaced by the military. This was Recep Erdogan, now Turkey's prime minister, once a follower of radical Islam and indeed jailed for inciting religious hatred. So far, though,

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the path of "enlightened moderation" seems to be paying dividends.

Next, Indonesia. It has taken a half-century for this historically tolerant nation to move from independence, acquired in 1949, to free presidential elections, carried out earlier this year. Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, established a regime called "guided democracy," which consisted mostly of guidance with very little democracy; in 1963, he proclaimed himself president for life. Thanks to economic mismanagement, however, combined with a rapid increase in the size and influence of the Indonesian Communist party and a disastrous decision to withdraw from the United Nations, he quickly began to wear out his welcome. In response to an attempted Communist coup d'état in 1965, the Indonesian military removed Sukarno from power and put down the revolt in a campaign that produced hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Sukarno's successor was General Suharto, head of the military, who was repeatedly reelected to office by a large "consultative assembly" packed with handpicked supporters. To ensure his reelection, Suharto banned most political parties. Although helping to redirect the Indonesian economy—by the early 1990's, it was growing at a rate of 7 percent per year—Suharto practiced a crony capitalism that could not survive. When a severe financial crisis hit the country in 1997, he was forced to resign in favor of his vice president—who proceeded, rather surprisingly, to liberalize Indonesian politics. Scores of new political parties were created, a new election law was promulgated, civil servants and active military officers were banned from campaigning, strict limits were enacted on campaign contributions, and the presidency was limited to two five-year terms.

In the 1999 election, one major contending party was headed by Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Gus Dur), the leader of a vast Muslim social organization and a moderate who favored a government without religious leanings. Another was headed by Megawati Sukarnoputri, or Mega as she is known; the daughter of ex-president Sukarno, she, too, supported a secular state with a democratic orientation. The consultative assembly picked Wahid for the presidency; Mega, whose party won more seats in parliament than any other, became his vice president.

Frail and soon blind, beset by financial scandals, ethnic violence, and a weak economy, Wahid was impeached by the legislature; his place was taken by Mega. Facing her was the need to deal with ethnic separatism in the provinces of Aceh and Irian Jayah, massive political corruption, and a moribund economy. She had only limited success. Jihad extremists, though lacking political power, have become violent in Indonesia, in one case killing hundreds of civilians, and radical Islamic schools, akin to the madrassas of Pakistan, now number well over 10,000. Corruption is rampant.

Under Mega, as under her predecessor, the Indonesians had one great advantage: they could remove her from office. This year there were new elections. In the first round—for parliament—Mega's party lost support in a vigorous contest with many other parties; in the subsequent balloting for a new president, Susilio Bambang Yudhoyno, a former military general who once headed the security services, won decisively, for the first time replacing a sitting Indonesian president by means of a popular vote. The new president has promised pluralism, tolerance, and a vigorous program of economic revitalization. One can only hope for the best.

Turkey and Indonesia are Muslim nations but not Arab nations. Morocco is both Muslim and Arab. After many centuries during which authority had been vested chiefly in tribal leaders, and then 44 years as a French protectorate, Morocco became a self-governing nation in 1956. King Muhammad V, who took undisputed power with the end of French influence, received the full support of local Islamic leaders; his son King Hassan II, who assumed office in 1961, made it clear that he spoke for all of Islam, proclaiming himself a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

Thereafter, and until his death in 1999, Hassan, a playboy who had been predicted to last all of six months on the throne, played a powerful role, surviving two army plots, a left-wing revolution, the opposition of radical Muslim fundamentalists, and the hostility of Algeria and Libya. Repeated internal turmoil did not diminish Hassan's commitment to religious liberty. Though Islam is the national religion, proselytizing was forbidden, Morocco's large Jewish population was protected, and nothing like the reactionary Wahhabi sect of Saudi Arabia was allowed to take root within the country's borders. Unlike Turkey, Morocco has never established formal diplomatic ties with Israel; but the king conferred in secret with Israeli leaders in the 1970's and welcomed Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres to Rabat in 1986.

Hassan tried to give his monarchy a legitimate basis by means of what he called "Hassanian democracy." Various draft constitutions were put to a vote, each receiving the somewhat suspicious sup-

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port of well over 90 percent of the population; each authorized personal freedom and parliamentary rule while also granting the king the right to rule by decree in an emergency. One law threatened criminal prosecution for anyone publishing anything the king deemed personally offensive.

Despite these restrictions, domestic security improved, the status of women was enhanced, and radical Muslim fundamentalists were contained. The king once remarked that "true Islam is tolerant" because "tolerance is the touchstone of civilization." In the 1990's political freedoms were expanded as Hassan sought membership in the European Union. A fifth constitution, approved in 1996, led to generally free elections, with no party winning a clear majority.

Upon Hassan's death, his son assumed the throne as Muhammad VI. Announcing that he supported economic liberalism, human rights, and individual freedom, the new ruler backed up his words by granting amnesty to thousands of prisoners and overseeing elections in 2002 that were generally regarded as free and fair. Morocco has been closely attached to the West. It is formally associated with the European Union. It was the first Arab state to condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Freedom House calls today's Morocco "partly free," ranking it ahead of its neighboring Arab states of Algeria and Tunisia and just behind Indonesia and Turkey. In freedom of the press, Morocco scores well above its neighbors. A recent survey of the status of women finds their position greatly improved, with women serving in parliament and holding an increasing share of jobs.

The country is not, however, problem-free. The 2002 elections created a governing coalition consisting of socialist and conservative parties and, troublingly, an opposition led by an Islamist party. In 2003, Islamic radicals carried out suicide bombings in the city of Casablanca. (The king responded that his country would "never accept that Islam" can be used "for the satisfaction of ambitions [to] rule in the name of religion.") But Morocco's greatest problem is similar to that of almost all Muslim nations: how to create economic growth.

THERE ARE other Muslim or Muslim-dominated countries, including Mali and Senegal, that provide some respect for individual liberty. Kuwait has improved personal freedom since it was liberated from Iraqi rule. Even Pakistan has expanded press freedom, so that today it ranks, in the opinion of those who survey these matters, only slightly behind India.

What general conclusions can we draw from this brief survey? The first element that most of the freer Muslim countries have in common is the effort to detach religion from politics. This they have done by being secular (Turkey), by constraining Islamic leaders (Indonesia), or by having a ruler who combines religious tradition with secular rule (Morocco).

To do any of these things, one needs a powerful and decisive leader. No one reading an account of Atatürk or Hassan can fail to acknowledge the force of their personalities and the enduring loyalties they managed to command. So deeply did Sukarno implant the commitment to Indonesian nationalism as a key ingredient of his regime that his successor Suharto continued to embrace the same secular national ideology, complete with its emphasis on unity and religious tolerance. For years, any Indonesian political party, including religious ones, had to endorse this doctrine (called *Pancasila*) or risk being banned.

Separating religion from politics was the key to the development of liberal nations in the West, and it will be the key to the emergence of such states in the Muslim world. By contrast, the autocratic rulers of the Muslim Middle East have either installed theocratic leaders (Iran, the Taliban), or suppressed religious dissent without allowing political freedom (Egypt, Syria), or done both (Saudi Arabia).

Many people wonder whether, in this respect, Arab states differ essentially from non-Arab Muslim states. It is a good question, but I do not think we know the answer. Even what constitutes an "Arab state" is a bit ambiguous. A country can be called Arab if its people speak Arabic or are descended from inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula, or if its government is part of the Arab League. Twenty-four countries have Arabic as their official language. Among them are Morocco, which has made substantial progress toward liberalization, and Bahrain and Kuwait, which have made a bit of progress. These are, admittedly, more than matched by the autocratic regimes we find in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. But the picture among non-Arab Muslim states is mixed as well: although Indonesia and Turkey have become reasonably free, against them one must set the mullah-controlled regime in non-Arab Iran.

Another conclusion concerns the role of the military. In nations with strong but not autocratic rulers (Turkey, Indonesia), the army has stood decisively for secular rule and opposed efforts to create an Islamist state; when fundamentalist parties arise, the military has usually shut them down, sometimes imprisoning their leaders. In a place like Pak-

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istan, by contrast, the military has been divided and has on occasion supported Islamic claims; the same goes for Morocco, where the military sometimes launched ill-conceived attacks on King Hassan but at other times waged a successful battle against rebels in the Western Sahara supported by neighboring Algeria.

The tolerably liberal regimes have enjoyed still other advantages. For one thing, none of them has had to struggle against a significant ethnic minority demanding independence. Indonesia is overwhelmingly Muslim (except on Bali, a Hindu island known not for any desire for independence but for its happy inwardness). There are Kurds in Turkey with separatist views, but with the exception of a violent fringe they have not challenged the sovereignty of Ankara. In Morocco, some see a difference between Arabs and tribal Berbers; over the last decades, however, this has produced few major political quarrels.

In none of these three countries, moreover, are there significant conflicts between Sunni and Shiite Muslims—for the simple reason that there are virtually no Shiites to be found in them. This offers a striking contrast to, say, Iraq and Pakistan.

Finally, it is important to note the continuing impact of the West on Muslim political systems, both for good and for ill. Socialism was embraced by Sukarno in Indonesia, which led to economic chaos and his replacement by Suharto. Fascism is the basis of the Baath parties in Syria and Iraq, and in the latter it provided the basis for the quarter-century rule of Saddam Hussein. Another Western idea, liberal democracy, became rooted in Turkey, though it has taken over a half-century to do.

But in most Muslim countries today, the chief rival to autocratic secular rule has been not Western ideologies but Islam. On a purely institutional level, it is not hard to see why. Islam is organized into mosques, and many of these support charitable and educational organizations that provide services reaching deep into the society. Political activism gathers around religion the way salt crystallizes along a string dangling in sea water.

The Protestant Reformation helped set the stage for religious and even political freedom in the West. Can something like that occur in Muslim nations? That is highly doubtful. There is neither a papacy nor a priesthood against which to rebel; nor are mosques comparable to churches in the Catholic sense of dispensing sacraments. There will never be a Muslim Martin Luther or a hereditary Islamic ruler who, by embracing a rival faith, can thereby create an opportunity for lay rule.

Thus, although there are moderate Islamic leaders, the best-known voices are those of the radicals, who use language ominously resembling that of Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolutionary who captured Iran from the Shah. Abdessalam Yassine, described by some as the major Moroccan political alternative to King Muhammad VI, wants to create an "Islamic democracy" in which governance would be entrusted to "the wise, not the sly." Rachid Ghannouchi, an exiled Tunisian leader, says he hopes somehow to preserve the Muslim faith while allowing personal freedom.

But Ghannouchi also decries the Western freedom that has produced "greed, deception, and brutality" and that believes in no "absolute value that transcends the will of man." To him, a free man should be "God's vice-regent." Many religiously inspired Westerners might agree with this in a metaphoric sense, but the historical lesson of the liberal West is that freedom trumps absolute values. This creates a problem Ghannouchi cannot solve.

As I have noted, political freedom in the West emerged out of a centuries-long struggle between the Church and its religious opponents. Tolerance slowly emerged as the only feasible alternative to intra-religious conflict. After many centuries, such religious tolerance was converted into secular rule in England, France, Germany, and Scandinavia. It may therefore take a long time before the proponents of "Islamic democracy," whatever that slippery term means, abandon their efforts and realize that no nation can be governed effectively simply on the basis of Islamic law.

How does all this relate to Iraq? Like Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, Iraq was created by European mapmakers after World War I. The borders of the new nation corresponded somewhat to those of Mesopotamia, a region once called the cradle of civilization. But when Iraq was created, as Margaret MacMillan points out in *Paris 1919*, a history of map-making after World War I, "there was no Iraqi people." There was also "no Iraqi nationalism, only Arab." The population was deeply divided, with Basra oriented toward India, Baghdad toward Persia, and Mosul toward Turkey. Creating one nation in that place was akin to creating Yugoslavia after World War II. It could only be done by a powerful ruler, like Tito.

Great Britain tried twice to bring strong central government to Iraq, and both times it failed. In the 1920's the British army occupied the country; when that became too costly, the British withdrew, leaving behind a constitution that empowered King

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Faisal. When Faisal died and his son could not manage affairs, the country splintered along ethnic lines. Civil war erupted, with military officers emerging as heroes. By the 1930's, the army controlled politics.

At the beginning of World War II the British Army once again occupied Iraq, in order to prevent Baghdad from forming an alliance with Adolf Hitler that would have jeopardized access to Iraqi oil. Britain also wanted to prevent the creation of an anti-British barrier between Egypt and India. This time the army stayed for seven years, ending with a failed effort to create a successful constitutional monarchy. As soon as its troops departed, the Iraqi army took power and initiated a reign that did not end until the American invasion last year.

Our chances of leaving an enduring legacy of freedom in Iraq are therefore uncertain. But uncertain does not mean impossible. An opinion poll taken in April 2004 suggests that, at least in principle, the Iraqi people do support liberal and democratic government. About 40 percent want a multiparty democracy like that found in most European nations, while only about 13 percent say they would prefer a theocracy of the sort found in Iran.

To be sure, support for a parliamentary democracy is unevenly distributed. Those who live in heavily Shiite areas are about as likely to want a theocracy as a democracy, while in the Sunni areas, where our troops have experienced the most attacks, and where the once-dominant but heavily outnumbered Sunnis fear majority Shiite rule, a parliamentary system is the most popular choice.

The good news is that, as compared with support for democracy, support for a *liberal* regime is very broad. Over 90 percent want free speech, about three-fourths want freedom of religion, and over three-fourths favor free assembly. Freedom is more important than democracy—a fact that might well have been true in America and England in the 18th century.

And here is where an important lesson lurks for us. Scholars at the RAND corporation have studied America's efforts at nation-building in the last half-century, ranging from our successes (Germany and Japan) to our failures (Haiti and Somalia) and to all the uncertain outcomes in-between (Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo). One of the most important things we should have learned, they conclude, is that "while staying long does not guarantee success, leaving early ensures failure."

In order for freedom to have a chance of developing in Iraq, we must be patient as well as strong. It would be an unmitigated disaster to leave too early. Our Iraqi supporters would be crushed, terrorists and Islamic radicals would have won, and our own struggle and sacrifices would have been for naught.

Liberalism and democracy would bring immeasurable gains to Iraq, and through Iraq to the Middle East as a whole. So far, the country lacks what has helped other Muslim nations make the change—a remarkably skilled and powerful leader, a strong army devoted to secular rule, an absence of ethnic conflict. If we may nevertheless be cautiously optimistic, it is because of the hope that we will indeed stay there as long as we are needed.

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The Islamization of Europe?

David Pryce-Jones

Only a few years ago, mass-murder attacks on the West in the name of Islam, like those of September 11, would have seemed like a thriller writer's fantasy. Nor would anyone have imagined that a bombing by Islamists could swing a general election in a European country, that a Dutch movie-maker might be shot dead on the street for a film about the abuse of women in Islam, or that one might find oneself watching, on television, the beheading of Western hostages by men crying out *Allahu Akhbar!* over their savage deeds. Pakistan now has a nuclear bomb, and this weapon is widely described as an Islamic bomb. To judge by their pronouncements, the Islamist leaders of Iran can hardly wait to perfect and use their derivative of it.

At present, it is not clear whether the religious/ideological rage that is the motive force behind these developments has any limits, whether it may yet succeed in mobilizing truly huge numbers of Muslim masses, or whether it can be deflected or crushed. What is clear is that a phenomenon that at first looked like a cloud no bigger than a man's hand has lashed up into a crisis with global implications.

Does this crisis amount to a "clash of civilizations"? Many people reject that notion as too sweeping or downright misleading. Yet whether or not it applies to, say, the situation in Iraq, or to the war on terror, the phrase has much to recommend it as a description of what is going on inside Europe today. As Yves Charles Zarka, a French philosopher and analyst, has written: "there is taking place in France a central phase of the more general and mutually conflicting encounter between the West and Islam, which only someone completely blind or of radical bad faith, or possibly of disconcerting naiveté, could fail to recognize." In the opinion of Bassam Tibi, an academic of Syrian origins who lives in Germany, Europeans are facing a stark alternative: "Either Islam gets Europeanized, or Europe gets Islamized." Going still farther, the eminent historian Bernard Lewis has speculated that the clash may well be over by the end of this century, at which time, if present demographic trends continue, Europe itself will *be* Muslim.

Today's situation has been a very long time—centuries—in the making. For much of that time, of course, the encounter between Muslims and the West remained stacked in favor of the latter, both militarily and culturally. Which is not to say that Europeans of an earlier age were blind to the danger posed to Western civilization by a resurgent Islam. One watchful observer was Winston Churchill, who wrote about Islam—or Mohammedanism as it was then called—in *The River War* (1899):

> No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is

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> a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science . . . the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.

Hilaire Belloc had similar premonitions 30 years later in *The Great Heresies* (1938):

> Will not perhaps the temporal power of Islam return and with it the menace of an armed Muhammadan world which will shake the dominion of Europeans—still nominally Christian—and reappear again as the prime enemy of our civilization? . . . Since we have here a very great religion, physically paralyzed, but morally intensely alive, we are in the presence of an unstable equilibrium.

To these early observers, nevertheless, it did seem that Western cultural and military superiority could be counted on to prevail, at least for the foreseeable future. (Belloc is better remembered for his boast, "We have got the Gatling gun, and they have not.") And prevail it did throughout a good part of the 20th century. In the last decades, however, another historical process has been at work drastically revising the calculus of power.

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMISM might be summed up as the effort to redress and reverse the long-ago defeat of Muslim power by European (i.e., Christian) civilization. Toward that end, it has followed two separate courses of action: adopting the forms of nationalism that have appeared to many Muslims to contain the secret of Western supremacy, or promoting Islam itself as the one force capable of uniting Muslims everywhere and hence ensuring their renewed power and dominance. In the hands of today's Islamists, and with the complicity of Europe itself, these two approaches have proved mutually reinforcing.

In Europe, the world wars of the last century finally undid and discredited the idea of the sovereign nation-state, the engine of the continent's preeminence and self-confidence. In place of this tried and tested political arrangement, now suddenly seen as outmoded and dysfunctional, institutions like the European Union and the United Nations were thought to offer a firmer foundation for a new world order, one that would be based on universal legal norms and in which sovereign power would be rendered superfluous. It has been the resulting decline of the European nation-state that has helped provide a unique opportunity for Islamism, itself based on a world-wide, transnational community that has been united by faith and custom since its inception and that traditionally has drawn no distinction between the realm of faith and the realm of temporal power.

A number of ideological movements have spread and fortified the modern projection of transnational Islam. Perhaps the most successful has been the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928, with branches today in some 40 to 50 countries. Yasir Arafat and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, are among those formed by the Brotherhood. Its more recent inspiration derives from the Egyptian-born Sayyid Qutb, whose three-year stay in the United States in the late 1940's and early 1950's convinced him that the West and everything it stood for had to be rejected, while Islam already provided every Muslim with state, nation, religion, and identity all in one. Saudi Arabia has spent billions of its petro-dollars financing groups, including terrorist groups, that promote this idea.

The 1979 revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran was an opening test of the new balance of forces between a rising transnational Islam and the declining Western nation-state. European countries, which in the postwar period seemed largely to have lost the will to respond to aggressive challenges from without, presented no opposition to the totalitarian Khomeini regime and no barrier to its aggrandizement. That left the United States, still a nation-state very much committed to defending its sovereignty. Indeed, to the ayatollahs and their allies, the U.S. represented a final embodiment of the Great Satan, fit to be confronted in holy war.

This remains the case today. In the meantime, though, a battle of a different but no less decisive kind has been taking place within Europe, where some 20 million Muslims have settled. Thanks on the one hand to their high birthrate, and on the other hand to the sub-replacement birthrate that has become the norm among other Europeans, the demographic facts alone suggest a continent ripe for a determined effort to advance the Islamist agenda.

IN ITS global reach and in its aggressive intentions, Islamist ideology bears some resemblance to another transnational belief system: namely, Communism. Like today's Islamists, Communists of an earlier age saw themselves as engaged in an apocalyptic struggle in which every member of a Communist party anywhere was expected to comport himself as a frontline soldier, and in which terror was seen as a wholly permissible means toward victory in a war to the finish. Compare Stalin's "If the enemy does not

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surrender he must be exterminated" with the refusal of the leader of Hizballah in Lebanon to negotiate with or ask concessions from the West because "We seek to exterminate you." To Sheik Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian with British citizenship who until recently led a group called al-Muhajiroun, the terrorists of September 11 were "The Magnificent Nineteen"—or, as he explains, the advance guard of an army of "our Muslim brothers from abroad [who] will come one day and conquer here."

Throughout the cold-war era, the European democracies under threat from Soviet expansionism were themselves home to Communist parties, as well as to an array of front organizations ostensibly devoted to peace and friendship and culture but in reality manipulated by and for Soviet purposes. In addition, many people from all walks of life accommodated themselves to Communism with varying degrees of emotional intensity and out of various motives, including the wish to be on what they perceived as the winning side and the converse fear of winding up on the losing side.

Each of these elements, in suitably transmuted form, is present today. The pool of local recruits upon which Islamists draw is itself very large. Of Europe's 20 million Muslims, it is estimated that 5 or 6 million live in France alone, at least 3 million in Germany and 2 million in Britain, 1 million apiece in Holland and Italy, and a half-million apiece in Spain and Austria.

It is true that most Muslim immigrants to Europe come simply with hopes for a better life, and that these hopes are more important to them than any apprehensions they might entertain about living in a society ruled by non-Muslims—something historically prohibited in Islam. Indeed, large numbers have assimilated with greater or lesser strain, and, in the manner of other minorities, have become "hyphenated" as British-Muslim, French-Muslim, Italian-Muslim, and the like. Religious life flourishes: if, a half-century ago, there were but a handful of mosques throughout Europe, today every leading country has over a thousand, and France and Germany each have somewhere between five and six thousand. Muslim pressure groups, lobbies, and charities operate effectively everywhere; in Britain alone there are 350 Muslim bodies of one kind or another.

Among these various organizations, however, a number function as Islamist fronts. Inspired by Saudi Arabia or Khomeinist Iran, by the Muslim Brotherhood or al Qaeda, they work to undermine democracy in whatever ways they can, just as Soviet front organizations once did. They push immigrants to repudiate both the process and the very idea of integration, challenging them as a matter of religious belief and identity to take up an oppositional stance to the societies in which they live. Issues of Islamic concern have been skillfully magnified into scandals in the attempt to foment animosity on all sides and thus further deter or prevent the integration of Muslims into mainstream European life.

The notorious 1989 *fatwa* condemning the novelist Salman Rushdie to death for exercising his right to free speech as a British citizen was an early example of this tactic of disruption and agitation. Another has been the attempt in Britain to set up a Muslim "parliament" that will recognize only Islamic law (*shari'a*) as binding, and not the law of the land. Still another has been the insistence, in France, on the wearing of the *hijab* by girls in public schools, a practice that clearly contradicts the ideals of French republicanism and is in any case not an Islamic requirement. The tactical thinking behind such incitements was well articulated by an al-Qaeda leader who, calling upon British Muslims to "bring the West to its knees," added that they, "the locals, and not foreigners," have the advantage since they understand "the language, culture, area, and common practices of the enemy whom they coexist among."

Still another phenomenon familiar from the Soviet era has lately made a repeat appearance in the West, and that is voluntary accommodation, or fellow-traveling, among non-Muslims. Leftist fellow-travelers once helped to create a climate of opinion favorable to Communism. Many knew exactly what they were doing. Others merely meant well; they were what Lenin called "useful idiots." In like manner, Islamist fellow-travelers and useful idiots are weaving a climate of opinion today that advances the purposes of radical Islam and is deeply damaging to the prospects of reconciliation.

As in the 30's and throughout the cold war, intellectuals and journalists are in the lead. Books pour from the presses to justify everything and anything Muslims have done in the past and are doing in the present. Just as every Soviet aggression was once defined as an act of self-defense against the warmongering West, today terrorists of al Qaeda, or the Chechen terrorists who killed children in the town of Beslan, are described in the media as militants, activists, separatists, armed groups, guerrillas—in short, as anything *but* terrorists. Dozens of apologists pretend that there is no connection between the religion of Islam and those who practice terror in its name, or suggest that Western leaders are no better or are indeed worse than Islamist murderers. Thus Karen Armstrong, the well-known historian of religion: "It's

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very difficult sometimes to distinguish between Mr. Bush and Mr. bin Laden."

One form of Islamist fellow-traveling masquerades as a call for "tolerance," or "diversity," and has penetrated right through the world of European opinion and European institutions. The British Communist historian Christopher Hill once concluded a book on Lenin with a reverent recital of the epithets the party had devised to glorify him. Pious Muslims follow the mention of the Prophet Muhammad with the invocation, "Peace be upon him." This practice has now crept into a biography of the Prophet written by a British writer not ostensibly a Muslim. To encourage such acts of deference, there has been a complementary effort to stifle contrary or less than fully respectful opinions. When the outspoken French novelist Michel Houellebecq pronounced Islam to be hateful, stupid, and dangerous, Muslim organizations and the League for the Rights of Man took him to court, just as the Italian writer Oriana Fallaci was sued for her book tying the 9/11 attacks to the teachings of Islam. Although both writers won their cases, the chilling effect was unmistakable.

The institutions that have been affected by Islamophile correctness run the gamut. In Britain, a judge has agreed to prohibit Hindus and Jews from sitting on a jury in the trial of a Muslim. The British Commission for Racial Equality has ordained that businesses must provide prayer rooms for Muslims and pay them for their absences on religious holidays. In a town in the Midlands, a proposal to renovate a hundred-year-old statue of a pig was rejected for fear of giving offense to Muslims. The British Council, an international organization for cultural relations, fired a staff member who published articles in the *Sunday Telegraph* arguing that the roots of terror and jihad were nourished in the soil of Islam, while the BBC canceled the contract of a popular television journalist for allegedly using negative language to describe the Muslim Arab contribution to mankind.

Commercial society has likewise rushed to accommodate real or imagined Muslim sensibilities: a British bank boasts that it will comply with *shari'a* prohibitions on the uses of money, and the German state of Saxony-Anhalt has become the first European body to issue a *sukuk*, or Islamic bond. Religious society is not far behind: even as bin Laden speaks of wresting Spain ("al-Andalus") from the infidels by violence, the cathedral of Santiago has considered removing a statue of St. James Matamoros ("the Moor slayer"), lest it give offense to Muslims. For the same reason, the municipality of Seville has removed King Ferdinand III, hitherto the city's patron saint, from fiesta celebrations because he fought the Moors for 27 years. In Italy, where Islamists have threatened to destroy the cathedral of Bologna because of a fresco illustrating the Prophet Muhammad in the inferno (where Dante placed him), thought has been given to deleting the art-work from the walls. Even the Pope has apologized for the Crusades. In secular Denmark, the Qur'an (but not the Bible) is now required reading for high-school students. And so forth.

THE LENGTHS to which apologists for Islamism are prepared to go is nicely illustrated by the case of Tariq Ramadan, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and a popular writer and speaker. As is well known, the American university Notre Dame recently offered Ramadan a professorship, but U.S. immigration authorities have so far rejected his application for a visa. This has elicited some classic examples of fellow-traveling obfuscation from both Americans and Europeans outraged on his behalf. A letter to the *Washington Post* protesting Ramadan's treatment undertook to explicate his supposed message to Western Muslims: they "must find common values and build with fellow citizens a society based on diversity and equality."

Not quite. What Tariq Ramadan has really proposed in his writings and teachings is that Muslims in the West should conduct themselves not as hyphenated citizens seeking to live by "common values" but as though they were already in a Muslim-majority society and exempt on that account from having to make concessions to the faith of others. What Ramadan advocates is a kind of reverse imperialism. In his conception, Muslims in non-Muslim countries should feel themselves entitled to live on their own terms—while, under the terms of Western liberal tolerance, society as a whole should feel obliged to respect that choice.

Ramadan happens to be a grandson of Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, but he is also a guarded writer. In fact, his is a relatively "moderate" and qualified expression of Islamic reverse imperialism. More overtly, and with an implicit threat of violence, Dyab Abu Jahjah, a Lebanese who has settled in Antwerp, has denounced the Western ideal of assimilation as "cultural rape," and aims to bring all the Muslims of Europe into a single independent community. He, too, needless to say, has his defenders and apologists among European liberals.

Or consider the European reception of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, heir to Sayyid Qutb as the religious authority of the Muslim Brotherhood. Wanted on charges of terrorism in his native Egypt, al-Qaradawi

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now lives in Qatar. Like Tariq Ramadan in Switzerland, he emphasizes that Muslims must keep apart from liberal democracy as it is practiced in the West while also availing themselves of its benefits and advantages. But he goes much further. Unlike Ramadan, he approves of wife-beating in the forms sanctioned by the Qur'an; as for homosexuals, he is agnostic on whether they should be thrown off a high cliff or flogged to death. Yet this year, in an official ceremony at London's City Hall, al-Qaradawi was welcomed as "an Islamic scholar held in great respect" by the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. "You are truly, truly welcome," gushed Livingstone, an otherwise enthusiastic supporter of gay pride.

Also appearing this year in London was Sheik Abdul Rahman al-Sudayyis, a senior imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca; among his many distinctions, al-Sudayyis has vituperated Jews as "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements, the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs." Standing beside *this* apostle of "diversity and equality" was a junior minister in the Blair government.

The Islamic Foundation, one of Britain's numerous Muslim bodies, has an offshoot called the Markfield Institute. In July, the London *Times* linked both the foundation and the institute to terrorism. An offended reader with an English name wrote to protest: "I hope that Markfield . . . will be allowed to help individual Muslims to practice their faith with peace and respect, in a multicultural Britain." Another reader, an Anglican canon in the Diocese of Leicester (a city with a Muslim majority today), asserted that the institute was simply trying to teach imams and Muslim youngsters alike to work within British institutions.

In just that spirit, and even in that vocabulary, the fellow-traveling Beatrice Webb used to advance the transcendent virtues of the Soviet social model. Gullible, false, and dangerous statements of this kind are now as common as rain.

In the realm of classical Islam, Christians and Jews once lived as *dhimmis*—that is to say, minorities with second-class rights, tolerated but discriminated against by law and custom. Many contemporary Muslims appear to idealize this long-lost supremacy over others, and aspire to reconstruct it. One way to work for this end is through violence and terror. Another way, the way of Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, is through words. One way and another, the project is advancing. Summing up the collective achievement so far, Bat Ye'or, the historian of "dhimmitude," has written that "Europe has evolved from a Judeo-Christian civilization with important post-Enlightenment/secular elements to . . . a secular Muslim transitional society with its traditional Judeo-Christian mores rapidly disappearing." She calls this evolving entity "Eurabia."

If that is the case, or is becoming the case, is it any wonder that some Europeans are switching sides, so as to be on the winning one? The sheer élan and cultural confidence displayed by Islamist spokesmen may have something to do with the fact that every year, thousands of people all over Europe convert to Islam. Some of these converts, from Britain, France, and Germany, taking the direct route from words to action, have gone on to play a disproportionate role in terrorism and Islamist militancy. Thus, at a rally organized in London last year by a radical offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, a high proportion of demonstrators were clearly not of Middle Eastern origin. At a recent trial in Cairo in which three British citizens were condemned to prison for subversion and intended terrorism, two were English-born, with English names. They were led away shouting defiance of the West.

There are certainly Muslims in Europe who look with horror upon what is being done in their name, and who wish to have nothing to do with the notion that they are entitled to live in the West as, in effect, conquerors. For wholly understandable reasons, few of them have the courage to speak out. One of the exceptional few recently wrote a letter to the London *Times*, giving his name and address, and saying that he defines his community as the people with whom he chooses to interact. He went on: "We do not all subscribe to the same way of being a Muslim, neither do we push our beliefs into the civic and political sphere." But, he continued, "Sadly the public does not always get our point of view, because the only Muslims who are consulted are those who choose to drag Islam into the political sphere."

One could not ask for a clearer repudiation not only of all Muslim Brotherhood-style proselytizers but, even more bitingly, of the patronizing and indulgent attitude adopted toward them by the European establishment. Those in Europe who have striven in ways great and small to extend special privileges to Muslims while subtly deprecating their own national identity and culture have indeed helped open the way to Islamic separatism and Islamist agitation. They have thereby hastened the very clash of civilizations that they (or some of them) foolishly claim they are avoiding. If Bassam Tibi is correct in stating that "either Islam gets Europeanized or Europe gets Islamized," powerful forces are at work to foreclose the question.

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The Left and the Islamists

Joshua Kurlantzick

THE MANHATTAN attorney Lynne Stewart has been wedded to activist causes since the 1960's, defending a long train of leftists who have had run-ins with the law. A grandmotherly woman with a wide, jowly pink face and graying hair in a bowl cut, she has represented antiwar demonstrators, aging yippies, and Black Panthers. In one well known display of her skills, she convinced a jury in the late 1980's that Larry Davis, a drug dealer who had wounded six policemen in a shootout, was himself the victim of corruption and racism, and won his acquittal.

When Stewart arrived at a federal prison hospital in Minnesota in May 2000, however, she met a client from a very different milieu. In the visiting room, Stewart sat down across from Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, the infamous blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for life in 1995 for inciting the 1993 World Trade Center attack and plotting to blow up the FBI's office in Manhattan as well as the United Nations and the Holland and Lincoln tunnels.

Though roughly the same age as Stewart, Abdel Rahman seems to have missed out on many of the famously tolerant ideals associated with her generation of activists. He has called for the slaughter of Jews, and for women to have little public role in society. Yet, with Sheik Omar, Stewart allegedly took a step beyond mere legal advice. Videotapes reportedly show that Stewart loudly spoke nonsense words while her client, under the din, instructed a man traveling with Stewart and posing as a translator to execute a new terrorist plot. For this, Stewart has been charged with providing material support for terrorism, since the dangerous sheik is forbidden from contacting his followers.

At Stewart's trial this fall, an FBI agent told the court that Sheik Omar later issued a proclamation, found in Stewart's office, announcing that "Any statement that comes from her . . . should be taken as if I said it." Also at the trial, an Egyptian reporter for Reuters testified that, at roughly the same time as this proclamation, he had received a call from Stewart relaying a message from Omar to his followers that they should break their cease-fire with another Islamist group.

Revelations of her complicity with known terrorists left Stewart nonplussed. "We hit if off," she gushed to the *Washington Post* about her interactions with the sheik. "He's really an incredible person."

THE SEEMINGLY improbable partnership that has emerged in recent years between figures like Lynne Stewart and Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman is the subject of David Horowitz's new book, *Unholy Alliance: Radical Islam and the American Left.** According to Horowitz, links that began to form between Islamists and American leftists at the end

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of the cold war have been cemented by 9/11 and the Iraq war. Calling this alliance the "Hitler-Stalin pact of our times," he warns of its potential impact, especially in undermining the war on terror.

Horowitz, the founder of the online magazine *FrontPage* and a former radical leftist, is at his best in documenting the intellectual connections between these strange bedfellows. He shows, for instance, how the anti-American pronouncements of Noam Chomsky have become increasingly indistinguishable from those of the fire-breathing clerics who appear on Arab satellite TV stations. Horowitz dredges up reams of similarly incendiary quotations from a range of American and Arab radicals. At the organizational level, he documents occasions on which leftist Western lawyers like Stewart have defended Muslim groups accused of abetting terrorism, and he points to the participation of militant Muslims in some of the most publicized antiwar rallies.

Horowitz also provides useful historical context for this unlikely romance. Over the past century, he argues, the radical Left in Europe and the U.S. has come to define itself as a "movement against, rather than a movement for." Primarily, of course, its target has been the United States, no matter what the United States has stood for. For Horowitz, the historical roots of today's "red-green" alliance (green being the color of Islam) are to be found in the American Left's long-standing obsession with the treatment of blacks and Native Americans and especially in its loudly proclaimed solidarity over the years with Fidel Castro, the North Vietnamese, and Communist rebels in El Salvador and Nicaragua. When the U.S. declared war on terror, it was time, once again, for the Left to lionize whomever America opposed.

The fact that radical Islamists hold social and cultural values diametrically opposed to those of American leftists is not, Horowitz maintains, as big a problem for either party as it might appear. As in a previous era, when the hard Left dealt with Stalin's widely acknowledged crimes by turning its attention to more attractive proxies of the cause like Vietnam and Cuba, today's radicals tend to pay tribute not to al Qaeda but to groups like Hamas, whose extensive social-service network can be invoked to soften the horrors perpetrated by its terror cells. (Interestingly, though, few if any of today's leftists have decamped for Teheran or Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, as some once did for the workers' "paradises" of Cuba and North Vietnam.)

For their part, the prophets of radical Islam have not only borrowed from the Left in recent decades—citing Bernard Lewis, Horowitz notes that anti-Americanism seems to form the one exception to their categorical hatred of Western ideas—they have learned to appeal to leftist sympathies. The Arab media now constantly condemn the U.S. for victimizing the third world and supporting tyrants. Many Islamists have even mastered the rhetoric of class struggle and anti-colonial resistance. As Horowitz observes, the Ayatollah Khomeini sought to portray his revolution in Iran as a movement of the oppressed, thus gaining the support of elements of the global political Left.

Horowitz's *Unholy Alliance* is among the first serious examinations of this troubling and relatively new relationship, and for that he certainly deserves credit. But there is a good deal more to be said about the origins of this ideological convergence and the concrete ways in which it has already found expression.

Useful as it is to be reminded of the long history of the radical Left's shifting allegiances, Horowitz scants what is decidedly new in the developments he describes. A decade ago, a red-green alliance would have seemed astounding. On campuses in Europe and America, women's groups usually avoided Islamist organizations, which often held highly misogynistic beliefs. The primary concerns of hard-leftist groups tended to be local issues, like labor rights and poverty. Few had ties to any Muslim organizations.

One powerful catalyst that changed all this was the birth of the anti-globalization movement. The real and imagined evils of globalization have breathed new life into the international Left, especially among the young. The social dislocation brought about by trade, outsourcing, and economic integration has proved to be a potent issue. But radicals have not rested content with protesting the policies they dislike. They have also sought villains, and they have found familiar ones: America and the Jews.

As Mark Strauss of the Carnegie Endowment has argued in "Antiglobalism's Jewish Problem" (*Foreign Policy*, December 2003), this is no accident. Despite the youth of many anti-globalization activists, they have drawn upon and updated venerable tropes of traditional anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism. The Rockefellers and Rothschilds have disappeared as international bogeymen, only to be replaced by theories of Jewish and American intrigue at the World Trade Organization and other supranational economic agencies. In the demonology of the Left, the top-hatted banker in striped pants has given way to the greedy, globe-trotting American consultant and the conspiring Zionist warmonger.

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That such images should have found a ready audience in the Muslim world is no surprise. But their dissemination depended on yet another recent development: the Internet. Before the advent of today's computer technology, the hard Left in Europe and the U.S. would have had no idea how to seek out Islamist sympathizers. A generation ago, it would have been necessary for the two groups to occupy the same physical space—an unlikely prospect, given that traditional Muslims living in Arab-French suburbs, for example, rarely mingle with the college students who frequent Left Bank cafes. The Internet has opened a door between these disparate environments. Since the 1990's, Europe and America have seen a dramatic increase in the number of homepages on the Web created by both radical Muslims and anti-globalization activists. Creating links among these groups has become, literally, a matter of pushing the right buttons.

HOROWITZ PROVIDES few details about the actual political and financial connections, as opposed to the ideological affinities, between Islamists and radical leftists in the U.S. More disappointingly, he does not turn his attention to Europe, where such connections abound, thanks to the large and growing presence of Muslim immigrants and the interest groups that cater to them.

In early 2003, several British left-wing parties—Marxists, socialists, Labor radicals—came together with Islamist groups, including the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, to create a joint steering committee. Its co-chairmen (to give something of its flavor) were Andrew Murray of the British Communist party and Muhammad Asalm Ijaz of the London Council of Mosques. On the Continent, at roughly the same time, similar alliances were cemented between Islamist organizations and leftist parties like France's Trotskyist Workers' Struggle.

These links were quickly put to use. Throughout 2003 and 2004, Islamists and anti-globalization activists in Europe have held a number of joint protests, marches, and conferences. A February 2003 demonstration in London, co-sponsored by the Muslim Association of Britain and the Stop the War Coalition, drew some one million people. In France, several anti-globalization groups helped to lead marches protesting the government's order that headscarves could not be worn in public schools. At all of these rallies, Islamist and anti-Semitic ideas have become commonplace (a precedent set, as Horowitz correctly notes, by the notorious UN World Conference against Racism held in South Africa in 2001). Islamists and anti-globalization activists have other pan-European activities planned for 2005.

Still more worrisome is the fact that the leftist-Islamist partnership has been able to convert its cooperation into votes. In 2004 elections for local offices throughout Europe and for seats in the European Parliament, Islamic groups either worked together with leftists on joint lists or helped promote Left candidates in Belgium, Great Britain, and France, where the hard Left won 5 percent of the vote, a substantial figure for any small group. The electoral advantages of this united front can only grow as immigration and high birthrates add to Europe's already sizable Muslim population.

IN THEIR outreach to Muslim radicals, hard-Left groups in the U.S. lag only slightly behind their European peers. Horowitz singles out one of the best-known of these organizations, International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), a New York-based group founded by former U.S. attorney general and long-time radical agitator Ramsey Clark (who has also represented the blind sheik). ANSWER, Horowitz shows, traffics in precisely the same kind of anti-American and anti-Semitic vitriol as the most hateful Islamists.

In fact, ANSWER's transgressions extend well beyond the dangerous rhetoric cited by Horowitz. In December 2003, the group helped to convene the second annual Cairo Conference, an anti-U.S. hate fest attended by a variety of Islamists, including Osama Hamdan, a top leader of Hamas. ANSWER has also given a seat on its steering committee to the Muslim Students Association (MSA). This American group presents itself as a benign advocate for Muslim college students. But as Jonathan Dowd-Gailey has recently documented in the *Middle East Quarterly*, the MSA has funneled money to the Holy Land Foundation and other charities accused of funding Hamas and Hizballah. MSA leaders have called for the death of all Jews and have spread pro-Taliban propaganda. The group advises its members that their "long-term goal" should be "to Islamicize the politics of their respective universities."

Indeed, for radicals in the U.S. and Europe, any taboo that may once have kept them from openly collaborating with known Islamic terrorists has largely disappeared. As Lynne Stewart's trial was proceeding in Manhattan in September, an "international strategy meeting" was being held in Beirut under the title, "Where Next for the Global Anti-War and Anti-Globalization Movements?" Among the hundreds of groups in attendance, from over fifty nations, were such pillars of the anti-globaliza-

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tion hard Left as Focus on the Global South, a think tank devoted to issues of international trade; ATTAC, a socialist network with branches across Europe and Latin America and links to European political parties; and CorpWatch, an American group that monitors corporate influence on politics.

And who was on hand as a conference host to welcome the delegates to Beirut—to make sure hotel rooms were acceptable, meals met everyone's tastes, and delegates could call their loved ones back home? None other than the Shiite terrorist group Hizballah, along with local Islamists and secular leftists. Though the conference did include radical advocates for the rights of women and other minorities, attendees seemed to have no problem taking directions from a group whose clerical overlords believe in a version of Islam that sentences homosexuals and adulterers to death by stoning.

Immediately after this conference adjourned, another left-wing group, this one of a religious cast, descended on Lebanon. A delegation of the American Presbyterian Church met with Hizballah officials in Beirut and praised the terrorist organization. As one of its members helpfully explained on Hizballah television, "Relations and conversations with Islamic leaders are a lot easier than dealings and dialogue with Jewish leaders."

The partnership between Islamists and the international Left poses its most immediate threat to Jews. As Horowitz rightly worries, the anti-Semitic propaganda spread by the red-green alliance stokes violence against Jewish communities and makes Israel an ever more vilified object of rage. Ultimately, too, Islamists may turn some part of the anti-globalization movement toward violence, just as groups in the 1960's like the Weather Underground took up guns and bombs as they became more radical. Indeed, many older members of the hard Left have never forsworn such tools. As Lynne Stewart told the *New York Times* (in an interview cited by Horowitz), there is nothing wrong with using "directed violence" against "the institutions which perpetuate capitalism."

In the longer term, the ideas propagated by the hard Left-Islamist alliance could also seep into the wider political culture, poisoning the mainstream Left and otherwise sane liberals. Praise for suicide bombers, Horowitz notes, can already be heard at times from members of Europe's socialist establishment. In France, Belgium, Great Britain, and other European states, some parties of the moderate Left have tried to co-opt Muslim groups while sidestepping their extreme rhetoric, hoping thereby to bolster the parties' own credibility with dissatisfied radical voters. The French Communists, traditionally one of the larger and more mainstream leftist parties, have been leaders in this regard.

On the American side, too, pressure seems to be building for Washington to engage Islamic extremists more directly, in an effort to blunt some of their sting. According to a recent report in the *Washington Post*, American diplomats around the world have begun to make contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood despite serious concerns about the organization, which has fomented revolution across the Middle East and "is dedicated," in the *Post*'s words, "to creating an Islamic civilization that harks back to the caliphates of the 7th and 8th centuries." Edward P. Djerejian, a former top State Department official, insists that the U.S. must "know where they [Islamists] are coming from, to influence them." To demonize the Muslim Brotherhood, warns a former CIA official, "would be foolhardy to the extreme." As if to confirm this new strategy, the government-funded National Democratic Institute recently hosted a delegation from a Yemeni party linked to the Muslim Brotherhood at the Democratic National Convention in Boston.

As we and our allies try to develop more sophisticated political and diplomatic strategies for dealing with the Muslim world, the temptation will be great to reach out to those Islamist groups that express some willingness to work with us. Signs of apparent reasonableness are difficult to resist, especially for well-meaning internationalist bureaucrats. In its item on the Muslim Brotherhood, the *Washington Post* reported that some State Department officials believe the group could be persuaded to temper its anti-U.S. stance and even to battle the jihadists.

Such hopes defy reality. They also ignore the long history of Islamist groups in Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan, and elsewhere that have worn a moderate face in their formative years but, once in power, have moved quickly to implement *shari'a* law, eliminate all opposition, and give aid to terrorists. As Islamists become more visible participants in the politics of the Western democracies, and as their new friends on the hard Left strive to obliterate or gloss over their record of mendacity and violence, the rest of us cannot afford to turn a blind eye to who they are and what they stand for.

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Can Sudan Be Saved?

Roger Sandall

The African peoples now being pillaged and destroyed have names like Zaghawa, Fur, and Massalit, and they live in the extensive region of Western Sudan called Darfur. The Arab horsemen of the apocalypse laying waste to the land are called janjaweed, and they are acting for familiar reasons: an unswerving sense of racial destiny, a demand for *Lebensraum*, and a fierce belief that only one form of divine justice shall prevail.

In Darfur itself—a mainly Islamic district, unlike the Sudanese areas running southward along the Nile where the part-Christian Dinka and Nuer live—religion happens not to be the issue. In Darfur the invaders want water and grazing land. That is why Arab Muslims have been bombing and shooting African Muslims: the Arab nomad with his cattle and horses wants the African farmer's fields—while raping his wife and burning his house down, too. With the Sahara inching southward and the continual degradation of the parched Sahel, and after years of pressure from burning heat and drought, the Arabs are driving the Africans out of the more fertile country and seizing the wells to water their cattle. In the capital city of Khartoum, the government smiles broadly and looks away.

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Of course Khartoum denies it is doing any such thing, and President Omar al-Bashir has regularly claimed that everything possible has been done to restrain the murderous bandits. But the slaughter goes on. A recent "Sudan Situation Report" prepared for the United Nations reads as follows:

> On 12 October IDP's from Uma Kasara reported that their village was burned down by unidentified gunmen on 2 October, displacing approximately 650 families from their village, and from two adjacent villages of Gendoul and Goz. Three policeman were reported as killed, and property looted. According to the same source, ten people are missing from the village and the rest have moved to the newly established camp in Nyala town, El Sereif.

Yes, approximately 650 families—and four more villages are mentioned later in the same report. Can it be that the word from Khartoum is somehow not getting through to the troops?

But what is an IDP? One answer might be that it is a way of using the vocabulary of social work to neutralize the horror of what is happening and the fate of the people concerned. An IDP is an Internally Displaced Person—as if we were dealing with someone mildly disoriented and needing help to get home. There is also a collective term issuing from the UN and its agencies that similarly needs glossing. In the aggregate, tens of thousands of IDP's become "conflict-affected populations."

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That is no doubt true; but English provides better ways of describing those in Sudan whose villages have been burned, whose crops have been destroyed, whose children have been massacred, and whose men and women have been savaged and slain. Let us call them the stricken and the doomed.

ACCORDING TO the UN, the number of stricken and doomed in Sudan runs to about 2.2 million. Harrowing accounts by victims appeared in the October 4 issue of *Time*, and readers with an appetite for this sort of thing can learn more at various websites. One such site tells about the work of the Atrocities Documentation Team assembled by the U.S. State Department's bureau of democracy, human rights, and labor in conjunction with the Coalition for International Justice. This group, which conducted 1,136 interviews with survivors, reports "a consistent pattern of atrocities, suggesting close coordination between governmental forces and Arab militia elements, commonly known as the janjaweed." The site also provides a brief history of the crisis in Darfur, and along the way explains some of the puzzling acronyms worn by the local resistance movements that, by defending their land and patrimony, have been challenging the ambitions of one Khartoum government after another for 50 years.

On the side of those fighting the janjaweed today there is a double-fisted organization, the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement, which boasts both a military and a political wing; its 4,000 members, along with a smaller outfit called the Justice and Equality Movement, are the ones carrying the fight to the Sudanese government. As is only to be expected, in the course of many years' bitter fighting there have been injustices and atrocities committed by the rebels, too. This fact is exploited to the full by a government seeking to obfuscate its own responsibility for the present catastrophe.

On July 30, 2004 the UN adopted Security Council Resolution 1556 demanding that the Sudanese government act to disarm the janjaweed militias and bring their leaders to justice. The demand has been ignored. Nor has Jan Pronk, the man appointed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to handle these issues, been helpful in stemming the drift of events. That hardly comes as a surprise. A member of the Dutch Labor party, Pronk was well known in the past for his strong interest in African liberation movements and his support for Cuba; he is even better known today for his role in the Dutch peace mission in the former Yugoslavia that ended with the murder of thousands of citizens of Srebrenica—after which he resigned from ministerial office. Now he is the UN's peacekeeper in Sudan. "Atrocities, very bad things, killings, rape, burning of villages have taken place," he told a press conference in Khartoum in late September, although he had found nothing that he deemed fit to describe as genocide.

In American diplomacy, the "G" word has taken a somewhat different path. The Bush administration was the first to air the charge, which was then seconded by Congress in a unanimous declaration. But the administration subsequently backed off a bit, perhaps to let the UN and the African Union try to sort things out. In any event, to raise the issue of genocide is to ask whether there is a racial component in the violence, as there has been in other longstanding criminal practices in Sudan.

When the janjaweed attack, they do unmistakably hurl racial abuse at their victims, alleging in particular that Africans are born to be slaves: "Slaves, run! Leave the country. You don't belong; why are you not leaving this area for the Arab cattle to graze?" It is not impossible that similar taunts were heard in Pharaonic times, since slavery seems to have been around in the Nile Valley for thousands of years. In the 1990's, indeed, before the present crisis, Sudan was most notorious for its flourishing slave trade. The victims in that case were not Muslims but mostly African Christians.

That this practice should have been allowed to continue unabated into the late 20th century is a story in itself. In thinking about it, and about its relevance to the role played by sympathetic outsiders in the current crisis, it might be helpful to have a brief look backward.

IN THE 19th century, a series of notable Englishmen were appointed by the Khedive, the viceroy of the Turkish sultan in Egypt, to stamp out the slave trade in neighboring Sudan. In their various capacities as provincial governors or governors-general, Sir Samuel Baker, General Charles George Gordon, and Sir Reginald Wingate all tried to do so. Yet they did not completely succeed. As late as 1933, Sir James Robertson, then a district commissioner in Kordofan, found something odd in the hollow tree behind his house. It seems that his Sudanese cook, when short of cash, had embarked on "a profitable line of trade beyond his normal duties":

> When on tour with his master he would from time to time acquire a small Nuba or Dinka

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child whom he brought back with him and hid in this hollow tree until he found a purchaser for him. In the end his illicit trade was brought to light, and he paid for it with a long term of imprisonment.

The memoirist goes on to talk amiably about the rather brackish water in the well and other mild vexations, with the story of the child in the tree being smoothly worked into a broader narrative of the kind that members of the British colonial administration often wrote in retirement in leafy Wiltshire. The anecdote is quaint and humorous, and although not moralistic it is in the end quietly edifying: the slave trader goes to jail.

It is the attitude revealed that is most interesting. What we are shown in this glimpse of the administrative mind is a relatively relaxed accommodation of ineradicable Sudanese ways. In 1933, this corresponded to a widely shared English upper-class conception of civilized colonial rule: live and let live, ensure that economic activity is more or less unhindered, and allow as much latitude as you can to existing authorities and existing conduct. More than this, the anecdote also embodies the kind of relativism that is the humane side of aristocratic management: culturally speaking, the lower orders are what they are; trying too hard to change them is a mistake; ultimately the African world is too deeply mysterious to grasp—and *noblesse oblige*.

A second, contrasting approach to Sudan may be found in the life and personality of General Gordon, who did not return to write his memoirs. (On January 26, 1885, the forces of the Mahdi, the Islamist fanatic of the day, attacked the besieged city of Khartoum, overcame all resistance, and within two hours killed and beheaded Gordon himself.) Unlike the Oxford-educated Robertson, General Gordon took most of his intellectual guidance from the pocket Bible he carried everywhere, and most of his inspiration from God. There was in him an exalted piety, an unrelaxed evangelical fervor, and a sense that not only slavery but evil itself should be extirpated wherever it was found—all of which contributed to his astonishing successes, and also to his doom.

A third view of Sudan slavery and the Sudanese situation can be had from the boy in the tree—not the boy himself, of course, but a distinguished present-day representative of the same Dinka people to whom the boy belonged and who are now one of the tribes most cruelly oppressed. I have in mind *War and Slavery in the Sudan*, a 2001 book by Jok Madut Jok, a Sudanese historian at Loyola Marymount University. Writing with pained dignity, muffled grief, and remarkable moral poise, Jok offers a moving testament to the suffering of his people; his book is recommended reading for anyone tempted to rush impetuously into the melee.

ALTHOUGH HE sketches the historical background, Jok's main subject is the current wave of slavery in Sudan. As I have noted, this began earlier than the recent developments in Darfur; it involved the districts of Equatoria and Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, bordering a number of countries in central Africa. Starting about 1983 with the renewal of an endemic and essentially racial conflict, the Sudanese government undertook to exploit traditional animosities to fight a war on the cheap:

> Cattle-herding Arab tribesmen, known as the Baggara, were recruited as a low-cost counterinsurgency militia and deployed against the southern opposition force. . . .
>
> Soon the Baggara discovered a very effective method of suppressing the rebellion in the south: destroying civilian villages and frightening the population into deserting their homes. But . . . the Baggara received only meager government assistance. It was more lucrative to capture large numbers of women, children, and any able-bodied men they could subdue, and take them into slavery in their northern provinces of Darfur and Kordofan.

There was nothing new about the terrorist style of assault recorded by Jok. When the Nile explorer Sir Samuel Baker was in the region in 1862, he observed that "a slave trader would sail to the south from Khartoum in the dry season with armed men and find a convenient village. The slavers would surround the village in the night, then just before dawn fall upon the village, burning the huts and shooting to frighten the people." Then they rounded up the women and children, looted the village of all cattle, grain, and ivory, and burned and destroyed everything else.

To explain how today entire provinces have been turned into graveyards, and millions desolated and displaced, Jok invites us to look into the minds of the modern Arab slavers themselves. First up for consideration is race. To the outsider, Jok observes, the skin of most Sudanese is black. But "north Sudanese regard themselves as Arabs, whereas south Sudanese identify themselves as predominantly African," or refer to themselves by tribal names like Dinka or Nuba. Built into Arab usages, he contin-

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ues, is the certainty of Arab superiority, an overweening racial contempt, and "a racist ideology which ascribes subhuman status to the enslaved southern communities."

Reinforcing the racial pattern, at least in the south, is religious enmity. Islamic law (*shari'a*), officially imposed in 1983, expresses the government's belief that Arabism, the Arabic language, and Islamic culture in general should prevail over the mixture of Christian and animistic beliefs among southern Sudanese. During the half-century preceding Sudan's independence in 1956, the British had actively opposed any such project, deliberately shielding the non-Islamic cultures of the south. For thus interrupting the march of Islam through Africa, they were bitterly resented by northerners. "This is why," Jok writes, "the policies of assimilation and Arabization in the south have been so vigorous and bloody, turning south Sudan into a graveyard over the years."

ALL THIS is clear enough. But what should be done? Here, an understandable ambivalence enters into what Jok has to say. Despite describing scenes of barbaric savagery arguably worse than those witnessed by such 19th-century anti-slavery men as Sir Samuel Baker, General Gordon, and David Livingstone himself, he plainly feels a little uncomfortable about the efforts of the numerous aid agencies that have come to help. Some gestures have been welcome—"Operation Lifeline Sudan has been greatly appreciated"—but there are too many policy disputes, too much distracting argument about possible dependency effects, too many "affluent representatives of a different world who make the gap between the haves and the have-nots only too glaring" and whose arrogance and insensitivity are hard to bear.

This portrait would hurt many of the frontline aid workers in the field. They are not naturally arrogant. They want to help. But they must often find themselves completely out of their depth. They do not know the language, they are surrounded by hundreds of dead and dying, by heat and dust and flies and smells. Is it any wonder that they sometimes end up impatiently pushing and shoving and even abusing the miserable victims they have come to save?

More generally, however, and especially in light of the multitude of summer missionaries now spread around the world digging wells and repairing roofs and painting walls, it seems reasonable to ask a different question. Has all this strenuously benevolent endeavor helped the peoples it has been designed to help, the Africans preeminently among them?

One typical listing on the web, the World Guide to Humanitarian and Development Volunteering, advertises "over 180 projects worldwide, from two weeks to two years or more, how to spend either a holiday-with-a-difference or a longer period—for students, professionals, retirees, and those with and without work experience, plus information on finding thousands more opportunities on the Internet." It asks for doctors, accountants, agronomists, surveyors, and teachers ready for work in Africa and elsewhere. On one sidebar there is even an item entitled "Singles in Sudan." The most poignant feature on the page, which could easily go unnoticed, shows a young African girl, aged about twelve and colorfully attired in local costume, embracing an aid worker of indeterminate sex. The African girl looks sideways and down and seems either puzzled or embarrassed or both. The aid worker looks upward to the heavens with the expression of a desperately seeking loner who has at last found love.

Some of these humanitarian workers describe themselves, or have been described by others, as secular missionaries. But Christian missionaries had a defined and terminable assignment. They converted the Fijians or Samoans, suggested helpful alternatives to eating taro and making war, put women into cotton dresses, got everyone singing hymns—and then went home. By contrast, no matter what happens to their exotic charges, big and aggressively redistributive charities like Oxfam have no intention of going home. Their purpose is to share Western wealth with whoever seems a worthy recipient, and their zealous staffs will go on doing this as long as anyone in the West is wealthy and anyone elsewhere presents an outstretched hand.

Others are more inclined to see the humanitarian NGO's as a kind of mendicant order in which the monastic virtues of poverty, chastity, and humility have been reinvented in forms more compatible with the vast sums they control, the living opportunities they offer, and the personal aggrandizement available within their bureaucracies. There are 8,770 employees in the World Food Program, over 600 in Rome alone. About 70 different organizations are active in three distinct regions of Darfur (north, south, and west), including Action Contre La Faim, the German Red Cross, Oxfam, Doctors without Borders, Care International, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, and so on. A complete list can be found in the UN document, "Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 6."

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THE FIRST thing to be said about the new mendicant orders is that the stricken and the doomed could not do without them. It is upon the activities of such organizations that the survival of millions in Sudan and elsewhere depends, and they are a vital part of the contemporary philanthropic scene. But this should not blind us to the peculiar ideology their leaders promote. As one rises up the hierarchical ladder that leads from the hard-pressed frontline troops to the people in the directorial chairs at the top—from the dust of deserts to the air-conditioned bureaucracy where men like the Dutchman Jan Pronk have made their careers—serious contradictions emerge.

At one UN website we are teasingly invited to "Tell a friend about Global Policy Forum." Well, why not? At *its* site, we find page after page revealing the conflict between the wealth the Global Policy Forum seeks to appropriate, channel, and disburse and the hostility of the professional disbursers toward those who produce that wealth. We find, in short, a commitment to the project of global redistribution—combined with the unexamined assumption that showers of cash will continue for as long as the mendicant orders require.

Thus, there is a page telling us how to resist and regulate globalization. It asserts that free-trade agreements like NAFTA "make trade 'free' for northern exports, without prohibiting the rich countries' protectionist measures"; that multinational corporations menace health and labor standards everywhere; that the World Trade Organization has been rightly criticized for its "opaque, undemocratic operating procedures and neo-liberal ideology" (using "neo-liberal" as a pejorative synonym for "free-market"); and that the "neo-liberal reforms of the IMF" only "exacerbate poverty." Last but not least, the Forum promotes the golden prospect of global taxation, in order "to fund the UN, its agencies, and other programs for worldwide human security and development."

In fact, these pages leave the abiding impression that their authors could hardly run a corner deli. Yet that does not prevent them from issuing a stream of global economic edicts, political fatwas, and social anathemas.

Nor is that the end of contradictions. Is it possible that humanitarian projects in Africa are being painstakingly devised for a world that does not really exist? Might it be the case that some projects *cannot* be carried out, because the improvements contemplated can no longer be made? That they are intended for beneficiaries whose lives have already been largely destroyed by violence and mayhem? And that, for reasons of institutional inertia, such projects—on which hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent—keep rolling along even though their goals are absurd?

A page welcoming us to the executive board of the World Food Program shows an enormous oval conference table in an even more enormous room, and helpfully gives access to all the available executive-board documents dating back to 1996. For our purposes, we may concentrate on agenda items four and eight of the Third Regular Session for 2004. The first of these bears the title, "Expanded School Feeding and Health Program: New Partnerships in Uganda." Describing a five-year program that is to cost $332 million "in its first phase," the item begins with a seemingly unexceptionable assertion: "The central development challenge confronting African countries today is the reduction of poverty, particularly among the rural poor."

Now, as economists like the late P.T. Bauer have shown, it is a striking fact that most of the African countries now receiving aid for "poverty" once had self-supporting farmers who grew crops successfully and fed their families and often had a surplus for sale. What has changed? Is *poverty* "the central development challenge," or is it rather the complete collapse of the *security* needed for a peasant farmer to get on with his life, grow his crops, and feed and educate his children? If the latter is the case, then a principal cause of poverty is the violence and killing that make productive farming difficult, and that will make educational routines nearly impossible. Might it then be true that the causes of poverty and of educational backwardness cannot be dealt with by aid at all—that both of them depend on first solving the unending civil disorders of the region?

The $332 million, we are told, will be managed by the Ugandan "Ministry of Education and Sport working with sectoral support from line ministries," and funds are to be specially directed to "conflict-affected areas." In these areas, the Ugandan ministry declares, "the number of both primary and secondary beneficiaries will expand during implementation of the program," these beneficiaries being "schoolchildren in day schools, teachers, and cooks."

The significance of this becomes clear when we get to the second text, agenda item eight: "Targeted Food Assistance for Relief and Recovery of Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Vulnerable Groups in Uganda." The budget for this three-year project has undergone no fewer than four revisions upward since its initial approval in 2002, and now

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stands at $249,266,641. But it turns out that, in precisely those "conflict-affected areas" where schoolchildren, teachers, and cooks are supposedly going about their educational tasks, there has been a violent insurgency by an Afro-Christian cult called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

"In February 2004," we read, "over 200 people were massacred by LRA rebels in a single attack. . . . Major humanitarian corridors . . . remain extremely insecure; many camps are inaccessible without military escort." As for the children, "40,000 seek overnight shelter in churches, hospital compounds, and NGO night shelters . . . for fear of being abducted." Thanks to the Lord's Resistance Army, it emerges, most of the stricken and the doomed in northern Uganda, exactly as in Sudan in west Darfur, are forced "to remain in camps; they have limited access to their fields and few possibilities of obtaining food and income." And the LRA continues to attack those camps, "burning, looting, raping and killing, and abducting children. They have disrupted travel by ambushing vehicles on most of the main roads. . . . Social and cultural structures are breaking down: men are leaving their families, there are frequent teenage pregnancies, vulnerable groups lack care, and HIV/AIDS incidence and risks are increasing."

With the best will in the world, it is difficult to see how the allocated school funds can be used as planned. Is it out of order to ask what happens to those hundreds of millions when they cannot be spent?

After a flurry of interest and visits to Khartoum by important persons, and calls for Western military intervention in Sudan, Washington, at least, seems to have grown cool to the idea of forceful action. Although the State Department is exerting what it calls "calibrated pressure" on Khartoum, the calibration has seemed much too fine to have any effect. In the meantime, Kofi Annan has appointed an international commission, consisting of a panel of international jurists, "to determine whether acts of genocide have occurred in the Darfur region of Sudan."

The panel appears to have at least one member of judicial distinction, Antonio Cassese, president of the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. It also includes four rather less distinguished members, including one from Ghana whose judicial utterances are seemingly not on record and another, Dumisa Ntsebeza of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who has waxed indignant about "the self-styled policeperson of the world, the U.S." and has invidiously compared the American position on reparation claims for black slavery to American policy on reparations to Jewish victims of Nazism.

Of course, what the panel decides is largely academic. What matters is what America and the West decide. On my own reading of the evidence, influenced both by contemporary documents and by *War and Slavery in Sudan*, there can be no question that genocide or something very like it is taking place. The question is what the West can conceivably do about cultural patterns that provide no way of reconciling differences or resolving disputes, that in country after country across the sub-Saharan region repeatedly escalate into massacres and pogroms, and that in Sudan are driven by a regime determined to dominate, subject, convert, and if necessary murder its opponents.

To send in the troops of the African Union, as some have suggested, is not just temporizing—it is a joke. A recent Rwandan unit found itself without most of the supporting equipment it required, and might just as well have been on guard duty back in Kigali. A few years ago, a Nigerian force, in a fit of pique, shot 100 or so of its hosts.

If piecemeal action were possible—biting off a western chunk of this vast territory and making a refuge within a defensible perimeter—perhaps it might be considered. But taking responsibility for a million or two million people and positioning an army to defend them might have awful collateral consequences, like the vengeful murder in reprisal of defenseless millions still under the control of a ruthless government. Is it worth taking the risk?

Also to be borne in mind is what happens in the longer term to people who become wards of occupying powers. Humanitarian organizations will undoubtedly see it as their duty to help such men and women leave Sudan for other countries. If I were a Sudanese, I would most certainly try to escape, and I would do everything I could to enter either Europe or the U.S. Indeed, I believe this is the natural, right, and proper thing for any Sudanese who cares about his life and his family to try to do. But how many refugees can, or should—or would—either Europe or America take in? There is an implicit custodial contract for the safekeeping of the stricken and the doomed, and this is something any occupying or would-be power would have to think about not just sympathetically but long and hard.

As for armed intervention by Western forces, the spirit quakes. It might be useful to visualize Sudan not as a quagmire but as a La Brea tar pit the size of Lake Superior, infinitely hospitable to bones,

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with endless uncontrollable frontiers alongside Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, plus a useful stretch of the Red Sea coast directly opposite Mecca. An Italian who spent 30 years in the south wrote in his journals in 1877 that "it must be borne in mind that the Egyptian Sudan is vast in extent and, if the government of a region wanted to keep watch on all the roads, an army of 100,000 troops would not be enough." Strategists might also consider the fate of Colonel Hicks and his 10,000 men, sent off to destroy the Mahdi in 1883 and slaughtered almost to the last man in an ambush. A modern army differs in many ways from a body of reluctantly dragooned Egyptian troops in 1883, but the picture is worth contemplating.

IN THINKING about humanitarian action, two ethical touchstones are relevant: pity, which was Rousseau's criterion in the 18th century, and the argument by Hugo Grotius a century earlier that force is justified to "stop the maltreatment by a state of its own nationals when that conduct is so brutal and large-scale as to shock the conscience of the community of nations." Tragically, however, despite what Jok Madut Jok tells us about the ruin of his people, and despite what we read in the newspapers every day, it must be seriously questioned whether an ideal and transcendental concept of justice can be allowed to determine the issue. What must be equally weighed in the end is what foreign soldiers can practically do, and foreign states can reasonably pay for.

The West, including especially Europe, has been deeply implicated in the modern disorders of the Muslim Middle East. By contrast, the West did not cause this African catastrophe; the West is not responsible for it; and it is most unlikely that the West can fix it. In Sudan its roots are both domestic and endemic, go back hundreds of years, and lie at the deepest levels of a pathologically racist ethnic psyche. In the meantime, despite the dubious policy choices and the even more dubious pronouncements of the elites who guide them, the frontline workers of the humanitarian agencies must of course be helped to do all in their immediate power for the stricken and the doomed—relieve distress, minister to the sick, displaced, and dying, and save those it is possible to save.

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Around the Block with A.J. Liebling

Joseph Epstein

Thirty years later I had a prolonged return match with Côte Rôtie, when I discovered it on the wine card of Prunier's in London. I approached it with foreboding, as you return to a favorite author whom you haven't read for a long time, hoping that he will be as good as you remember.

—A.J. Liebling, "Just Enough Money"

SINCE HIS death at the age of fifty-nine in 1963, the *New Yorker* writer A.J. Liebling has had a good posthumous run. His books have been in and out of print and then back in. He is often anthologized. His name pops up with some regularity, in the way that H.L. Mencken's used to do. Ah, people say, wistfully, if only A.J. Liebling were alive to write about this or that event or personality!

Most frequently, they say this in connection with some piece of scandalous behavior on the part of the press—for Liebling was one of the first journalists to make the behavior of newspapers a part of his regular beat. But it was only a part. Francophile, gourmand, boxing aficionado, *flâneur* on an expense account, Liebling had the splendid luck to be able to write about anything that interested him for a good wage and for the large audience the *New Yorker* provided in what are generally considered to have been its glory days.

There were four hardy perennials in the magazine's garden in those days. Liebling was one, and E.B. White, James Thurber, and Joseph Mitchell were the other three. (I make an exception of Edmund Wilson, who wrote regularly for the magazine but was never, strictly speaking, a *New Yorker* writer.) None of them has worn all that well. Aside from a couple of essays and his two popular children's books, *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*, White's writing seems thin, overly delicate, self-approvingly sensitive. A few years ago, the Library of America devoted a volume to Thurber; reading through it, I found him, at best, only faintly amusing. As for Joseph Mitchell, who suffered a writer's block of some 30 years' duration, his career underwent a revival not long before his death with the appearance in 1992 of a retrospective collection, *Up in the Old Hotel and Other Stories*; admirable though much of the writing seemed as reportage, it also seemed closer to history, or to historical curiosity, than to literature.

Which leaves A.J. Liebling. A new collection of his writing, *Just Enough Liebling*, has just come out, with an introduction by David Remnick, the current editor of the *New Yorker*.* The book offers ample portions of journalism in his various bailiwicks: as World War II correspondent, boxing

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* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 560 pp., $27.50.

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writer, gastronome, press critic, and chronicler of colorful urban characters. How has he held up?

OF THE four regular *New Yorker* contributors, Liebling was the one whom I read with the greatest pleasure in my early twenties. Thurber and E.B. White, after all, wrote chiefly about small-town America, and Joseph Mitchell, whom I eventually came to know a little and like a lot, was a Southerner writing about the wonders of New York as essentially a refined and sympathetic tourist. Only Liebling seemed intensely urban and, to my mind, elegantly urbane.

He also happened to be the only Jew among them—or so one assumed from both his name and his sensibility, which was, in a phrase, worldly-ironic. His beat, too, was partly "Jewish": New York bookies, promoters, people around the fight game, hustlers, and characters like Morty Ormont (formerly Goldberg), the manager of the Jollity Building on Broadway, the *tummler* Hymie Katz, and the gang at Izzy Vereshevsky's I. & Y. Cigar Store.

Apart from some pieces he wrote about the Middle East late in his career, Liebling never mentioned his Jewishness. In *Wayward Reporter: The Life of A.J. Liebling* (1980), Raymond Sokolov makes the case that he was uneasy about it. His father, an immigrant from Austria, had come to America with nothing as a boy and done well. His mother was of a moderately wealthy Jewish family in San Francisco. In most ways, his was a privileged youth: German governesses were on the premises for him and his younger sister, and there was even a butler at their Long Island home.

Liebling would claim his parents had no social aspirations, but even his first name, Abbott, a pretentious Americanization of Abraham, bothered him; as early as he could, he insisted that friends call him Joe. On more than one occasion, he went out of his way not so much to put down as to cast aside his Jewishness. Part of the impression he wished to give was that of a citizen of the world: a man beyond mere religion or even ethnic identity.

One way in which Liebling was not privileged was in his physique. Near-sighted, a fat boy with dainty hands and disproportionately small feet, ill-coordinated, two years ahead of himself in school, he came to admire the Irish kids in the neighborhood who were better athletes, tougher, and generally more at ease than he. He was one of those little boys who become absorbed with military history because they know that they are unlikely to create any on their own.

As a schoolboy writer, Liebling must also have known that his was to be a spectatorial life, a life spent leaning against the wall watching other people dance and then running home to record his impressions. But if one was condemned to live life at a second remove, journalism offered the best ringside seat. H.L. Mencken, with whom Liebling is often compared, remarks in one of his autobiographical volumes that when he finished high school he had the choice of going to college, which would mean listening to the prattlings of boring German professors and on Saturdays sitting in the football stands wearing a raccoon coat, or of getting a job on a newspaper, which would mean flying off to fires, attending executions, and going along on raids of bordellos.

No real choice here, as Mencken saw it, and he took a pass on college. Liebling himself, although he went to Dartmouth at sixteen, soon cut loose to enter the larger world of metropolitan journalism. He worked first in Providence, then in New York, and eventually pitched up at the *New Yorker*, where he found a permanent home.

RIGHT OUT of the chute as a journalist, Liebling set himself up as a man of the world. Not yet truly worldly, he gave a fine impression of it even when young, and would keep it up all his life in whatever he wrote. If cynicism, as he would later write, "is often the shamefaced product of inexperience," worldliness is the product of more than one walk around the block; and he managed to get around that block quite a few times.

Three things he admired above all else: courage, craft, and con. He honored gallant soldiers, hard-working boxers who knew their craft, and con men in possession of panache. He wrote about soldiers in his dispatches from Europe during World War II, a period he would later recall in his memoir, *Normandy Revisited*. About boxers he wrote mostly in the 1950's, which is when the sport was in the midst of a great era in every weight division. I never thought a championship fight was quite over until I read Liebling's account of it in the *New Yorker* a week or so later. Although he claimed that the English essayist William Hazlitt was a dilettante when it came to boxing, he took Hazlitt's famous essay, "The Fight," for his model of how to proceed, writing about preparations for the fight, getting to the fight, the fight itself, and the aftermath of the fight.

Liebling's writing on boxing tended to shade into his pieces on New York low-lifes: men who could turn a quick buck through ingenuity and

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without undue perspiration. Preeminent among them was an old racing writer for the *New York Evening Journal* named J.S.A. Macdonald, who also called himself Colonel John R. Stingo. Liebling published a number of pieces on the Colonel, brought together as a fake as-told-to book titled *The Honest Rainmaker* (fake in the sense that Liebling probably supplied lots of what movie credits used to refer to as "additional dialogue").

In an early chapter of his last book, *The Earl of Louisiana*, Liebling reported on a tour he had taken of the Council Chamber of the city of New Orleans, his guide announcing that "each session of the Council is opened with a prayer by a minister of one of the three great faiths, Catholic, Protestant, and Hebrew. They take it in rotation." To which Liebling adds, rounding out the paragraph, "I touched my breast, to make sure my wallet was still with me."

Always on the *qui vive* for scam artists, he was also inordinately fond of them. His own great scam, or so he allowed his readers to think, was journalism itself. He could make the writing of a *New Yorker* piece sound more like a night on the town than the kind of effort that craft of the kind he commanded requires. The picture he would draw of himself, a fat man stopping for a snack of pork chops and bourbon in a Harlem restaurant before taking off for a championship fight at the Garden, all expenses paid, was itself pleasing to contemplate. Whatever his subject, he caused his readers to believe that life was a great amusement, a sweet adventure, and even if they could not participate in it directly, in him they had the best possible cicerone, the man in possession of the real lowdown, the true gen, on all the proceedings.

Of Liebling's various subjects, food, mostly the food he had eaten in Paris as a young man, was the one with obsessional standing. It pops up almost everywhere; he mined it for metaphors; and, no mere theoretician, he consumed it in sufficient quantities that, bald and round-pated and wearing round wireless glasses as he did, he came to resemble nothing so much as an octopus without the advantage of tentacles.

Unfortunately, Liebling proved unable to follow the sensible regimen of his idol Colonel Stingo, who proclaimed: "I have three rules of keeping in condition. I will not let guileful women move in on me, I decline all responsibility, and I shun exactious luxuries, lest I become their slave." Liebling had three marriages, two of them disasters and the third, to the writer Jean Stafford, no *déjeuner sur l'herbe*. Despite his impressive literary productivity, his high living kept him always in debt. Food and drink gave him the gout as well as the systemic kidney and heart troubles that eventually killed him. Luxuries hardly get more exactious than that.

If Colonel Stingo was, in Liebling's description, "the best curve-ball writer since Anatomy Burton and Sir Thomas Browne," Liebling himself threw lots of knuckleballs. You could never know where many of his sentences were going, though they invariably managed to wind up smack in the catcher's mitt for a clean strike. In writing about the European theater in World War II, his prose was plain but efficient, with occasional ironic touches. But the older he got, the lower his subjects became, the more rococo grew his prose. As a stylist, he belonged to the category of deliberate overwriters for comic effect. Other famous practitioners in this line include Mencken, Westbrook Pegler, and Murray Kempton, who, when the mood struck him, could write about Jimmy Hoffa in the cadences of Lord Macaulay.

A characteristic Liebling sentence is stoked with an unexpected allusion snugly woven into complex syntax, usually topped off with a striking image. Here he is on a secondary corner man at Wiley's Gym in New York:

> His thin black hair was carefully marcelled along the top of his narrow skull, a long gold watch chain dangled from his fob pocket, and he exuded an air of elegance, precision, and authority, like a withered but still peppery mahout in charge of a string of not quite bright elephants.

A 19th-century boxing writer named Pierce Egan is said to have given Liebling his clue to the device of applying high reference to low subject. But no one could have taught him his gift for metaphor and simile, which, as Aristotle instructs in the *Rhetoric*, is god-given. He could do the quick, sharp simile: "Southern political personalities, like sweet corn, travel badly." He could do the complex simile: "The moon slipped into a cloud abruptly, like a watch going into a fat man's vest pocket, and didn't come out again." And he could do the elaborately extended metaphor, as when he strung a 4,000-word essay about Stillman's Gym out of its jokey metaphoric title, "The University of Eighth Avenue."

His style gave Liebling a nice comic distance from his subject, allowing him to view the world as if he were an anthropologist from another planet, or perhaps an ironist from an earlier century. In this capacity he wrote an exceptionally large number of amusing sentences, and no one was more

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amused by them than he. At the office of the *New Yorker*, he could be heard laughing out loud in the act of composition. His own assessment of his talent was that he "could write better than anyone who could write faster, and faster than anyone who could write better."

Not all the similes came off. "Newspapers can be more fun than a quiet girl," for example, isn't even on the dart board. And sometimes the whole bit could seem gratuitous and overworked, as when he brought in Henry James while commenting on a boxer who had strangled a monkey; reading such stuff today, you can almost hear the shriek of a whistle, the spray of ice, the referee calling a penalty for high *schticking*.

Liebling's attitude toward his subjects was another matter. The *New Yorker* had three writers on the low-life beat: Liebling, Joseph Mitchell, and the now nearly forgotten John McNulty. Mitchell entered into the low-life scene with genuine sympathy. McNulty did not have to enter into it, having come out of that life himself as the child of working-class Irish parents; if he reported the elevator man in his building playing the ponies every day, he did so without condescension, for he was playing them, too.

Liebling's view of the low-life scene gives a clue to his limitations. It was almost consistently condescending; in the end, his was a form of highly amusing slumming on behalf of middle-class readers. He played the bad grammar and mispronunciations of the trainer Whitey Bimstein for laughs; he regarded anyone not from New York or France as a yokel; and he never really moved beyond treating his subjects as other than colorful characters. "I never married," the boxing manager Charlie Goldman says, "I always live a la cart." Raymond Sokolov thinks "this bending down of Liebling's to his material" not snobbish but rather "a trick of perspective that did not diminish Liebling's subject but did serve to enlarge and exalt Liebling." This, however, is precisely how snobbery works.

Much of Liebling's writing seems dated now, as dated as Joseph Mitchell's and for some of the same reasons. Something grim has happened to the culture. Today we no longer have "characters" but only "cases." The interesting drunks in McSorley's saloon, written about so sympathetically by Mitchell, have been reduced in our understanding to alcoholics suffering from a genetic disease; the outlandish Joe Gould, who confided in Mitchell that he was writing a history of the world, strikes us as little more than a pathetic homeless man edging into psychosis.

Most dated among all of Liebling's writings are the ones for which he is currently most honored: his essays on the press. In his time, he was considered heroic for taking on his own medium of journalism, but neither the press he was critical of nor the issues he thought central really exist any longer. He regarded nothing as more dangerous than a one-paper town, and looked upon the swallowing-up of one newspaper by another—as happened in the early 1960's in New Orleans and elsewhere—a disaster for democratic discourse. He felt newspaper ownership was largely in the hands of Republican fat cats who tyrannized over their reporters, forcing them to write both news and editorials the way they, the owners, wanted. "Freedom of the press," he wrote in what has become his best known aphorism, "belongs to them who own one." Today one can only say: tell that to the publishers of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, who, far from tyrannizing over their staffs, seem to have acquired their inadequate education and ideas from reading their own employees.

Liebling's other criticisms seem similarly irrelevant today. A one-paper town is now a smaller problem than the fact that fewer and fewer people read newspapers at all. Journalism is less and less about scouting stories than about cultivating leaks—Pulitzer prizes in our time go to those with the best undisclosed sources. The editorial page has increasingly given way to the op-ed mentality, in which an editor finds people who could not possibly agree on anything and turns them loose in the hope that something mystically known as "dialogue" will ensue. Then there is what appears to be the lessening of the national attention span, first understood by *USA Today*, whose editors picked up on the hard truth that people do not want more but briefer news, and most of it, thank you very much, about sports and celebrities.

Next to these and other matters, Liebling's complaints about unfair coverage of labor disputes or journalists faking things when they lack real information—an example included in *Just Enough A.J. Liebling* is the reporting on Stalin's illness and death when no one could be quite sure of either—now seem quaint and not especially readable.

WORLDLINESS, ALAS, pales and very quickly stales. It is a fine thing to know the score; but the problem is, the score is always changing. Charm, too, can wear thin if there is not much else behind it, and it is difficult to say what else but charm there was behind Liebling's writing. Is it sufficient that he was indeed vigilant in his refusal not to let

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ase of E.E. Cummings, pull the s? In the end we want to know what of life.

er to whom Liebling is most frequently is H.L. Mencken. The comparison much Mencken. He, too, prided himself on being ily and unconnable, but he was deeper, more ughtful, and more learned than Liebling, whose own reading and general culture were thin. Although Liebling rarely missed a chance to mock "the boys from the quarterlies" or take a shot at people who got a charge out of using the word "dichotomy," Mencken's attacks on intellectual quackery were wider-ranging and more penetrating because they had philosophical backing. In an essay in one of his *Prejudices* volumes, Mencken wrote:

> No one knows Who created the visible universe. And it is infinitely improbable that anything properly describable as evidence on the point will ever be discovered. No one knows what motives or intentions, if any, lie behind what we call natural laws. No one knows why man has his present form. No one knows why sin or suffering were sent into this world—that is, why the fashioning of man was so badly botched.

It is difficult to imagine Liebling writing such a passage, or having such thoughts about such things, even inchoately.

What *did* Liebling think? Politically he was a liberal, in the old-fashioned and honorable sense of being on the side of the underdog. He was generally for fairness, though he was not always fair himself, to put it mildly.* To his credit, his political sentiments did not extend to sharing a taste for the strong anti-Americanism espoused by a writer like Graham Greene. (One of the last pieces he wrote for the *New Yorker* was an attack on Greene's *The Quiet American*.) Yet nothing like a vision or view of the world emerges from his voluminous journalism.

When John Lardner, his colleague at the *New Yorker*, died, Liebling was assigned the obituary. Lardner "was a funny writer," he wrote, "and, though he would never have admitted it, an artist." I suspect Liebling, if so accused, would have been pleased to admit it. Sokolov's case for Liebling's artistry is that he "possessed a first-rate literary sensibility and worked intricately in genres the world dismisses as second-rate." I prefer the assessment of the *New Yorker*'s cover artist Saul Steinberg: "He was out of an 18th-century world of elegance based on artificiality, and he had prepared a sort of personality for himself."

In its day, that personality not only charmed but suggested inner depths that, sadly, were not really there. In that sense, *Just Enough A.J. Liebling*, the title of this newest collection, is peculiarly apt. Rather than enticing us to read on, it suggests satiety: we've had just enough. About a writer I once admired, even adored, I derive no pleasure in saying this.

* In his biography of Whittaker Chambers, Sam Tanenhaus reports that Liebling not only repeated stories about Chambers's paranoia but at one point became a "clandestine operative for Alger Hiss," tricking the Columbia literary scholar Mark Van Doren into "handing over his Chambers correspondence and then deliver[ing] the letters to Hiss's attorney Harold Rosenwald." With what Tanenhaus calls "remarkable audacity," Liebling then "continued to report on the case in his 'Wayward Press' columns [in the *New Yorker*] even as he tweaked the nation's dailies for their biased coverage."

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Vertigo
A Story

John J. Clayton

HERE IS a man stripped of much of what he thought of as his life. His son is dead, his work is gone, his mother fading, his daughter off at college and when they speak on the phone they have nothing to say. This summer, this fall, he seems deep in dream. He's thick, this Daniel Bergoff: thick-jawed, balding, a chunky, strong man, a one-time wrestler, with body hair and long heavy eyebrows half gray, half black, not someone you'd expect to be a dreamer. A gorilla, dreaming? He'd been comptroller and chief financial officer for a high-tech company in Cambridge, someone more likely to think numbers and protocols than to take in light on barn and field and trees, not a candidate for revelations.

But for months now he's been walking, walking and sitting, watching afternoon light playing on barn and field and trees and on the water of the pond, Walden Pond. Thoreau's pond—well, hardly that, with its smoothed-out trails now railed off for handicap access, sandy beach and timbered steps, the hum of traffic on Route 2, but still full of beauty. He's been praying from the *siddur* or sitting, eyes shut, watching the little monkey of the mind do its tricks.

He breathes in beauty. He remembers the visit. One night, four months ago, late spring, after the unveiling of his son's stone, he had a dream, and in the morning he told Shayna about it. "I was wrapping myself in my *tallis*, and the fringes became feathers, the *tallis* became wings that lifted me. Of course I didn't make up the image. In the morning prayer, when you put on your *tallis*—it's compared to sheltering wings."

"It sounds like a healing dream," she said. "Beautiful. I should have such dreams."

He felt it was a mistake to tell her—it might keep the angel away. The next night he wanted the dream so much he couldn't get to sleep. But when he finally slept, the wings were around him again, or he was wearing the wings, only the whole atmosphere was full of danger. This time he kept the angel to himself.

Of course, you could say his strangeness, his silence, the visitation itself—they were simply his ways of grieving, of coping. Gabe: killed just over a year ago. The first anniversary of his dying, the *yohrtzayt*, was last spring. And upstairs Daniel's mother, Gertrude, barely complaining now about her arthritis, murmurs old love songs in a husky voice ruined by cigarettes, as if she were the ghost of Edith Piaf, of Lotte Lenya. At eighty-five, she's slipping into forgetfulness; remembers, forgets. She still walks a little, still cooks a little. She's writing family history on her own laptop. She can still do that, though sometimes she forgets how to turn off the machine. Or else she sits by the window,

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open a crack to let the smoke out, and nods to herself. This was a woman who wrote a witty syndicated column that at its peak was picked up by over a hundred newspapers. Now, old. Her skin smells sweet.

Sometimes he hides upstairs, sitting in Mother's room in an old easy chair his daughter Celia made him drag home from the dump when she was a kid. Until Gabe went off to Dartmouth, this was Gabe's room; maybe that's another reason Daniel sits there. When his mother began to wither a few years ago, her crusty, haughty selfhood to soften, and she moved in, Gabe's room seemed best. Gabe hadn't minded; when he came home he slept in the study.

Gertrude Bergoff: old bones, with a little puffed belly under her blue housedress, she's calmer than in Daniel's memory she's ever been. Even her wrinkles seem to have relaxed; her face seems youthful. "So? How's your day?" she asks. "Fine. Fine, Ma." And sometimes she remembers about Gabe and they shake their heads. But sometimes she asks, "When's your Gabe coming home from school? Isn't he late? He's playing soccer?" And he reminds her, "No, Ma. He's not playing soccer. Remember what happened to Gabe? Remember? The accident?" And she begins to cry. "Oh, no, not Gabe, it couldn't happen, Danny, Danny"—as if learning for the first time all over again, and he comforts her. He rubs her back in big circles the way he'd once rubbed Gabe's back. "God should only take me soon," she says.

SOMETIMES HE pokes through the closet, still Gabe's. His school papers. His soccer awards, papers from the summer he interned at the State House in Boston. His baseball cards, thousands of cards. When he was eight, nine, ten—that's where his birthday money, his Chanukah money went.

Daniel's mother smiles at him, one eyebrow tilted up in an irony that no longer bites. He sits with her, his eyes in soft focus. Or he picks up a photograph Gabe took and tries to locate himself in those eyes, as if by yoking his look to Gabe's, he can reach him in the world-to-come. With his mother he can be as strange as he wants—she thinks it's ordinary. Otherwise, he hides his strangeness as best he can.

He can't hide it from Shayna. It's a Friday morning. Leaning against the kitchen counter, her clear gray eyes gazing steadily, brows raised in a pretense of amusement, she watches him knead dough for challah, pressing knuckles and rolling out with the heel of his hand, turning the ball, and again. She lowers her head and stares at him over granny glasses. It's probably a gimmick she's picked up as a guidance counselor, and though he's no teenager he shrinks like a kid from meeting her glance. "We need to talk about this, Danny."

"Talk about what? Nothing's wrong."

She puts her hands on his shoulders, kneading them as he kneads the dough, turning him to face her. She raises a lecture-finger. "This peculiar retirement—that's the problem. You? You're too young to retire. You're not even sixty. So—you know what you're like? You're like some Olympic athlete who suddenly quits training. All those muscles are revved up aching to be used, and soon they're just aching, full of acid."

"Maybe I'm in training for something else."

"In training! You're in mourning is what you're in. In your sleep, I've heard his name. You turn over and curl up away from me. 'Gabe, Gabe. . . .' Many nights, Danny."

He shrugs. Well? Isn't it true for both of them? Didn't he hear Shayna crying just last week behind a shut bedroom door? He closes his eyes but keeps kneading the dough, heel of his hand, roll it under, heel of his hand, until the dough resists, a fat lady's earlobe. He puts it into the yellow bowl.

"Look, look at you. Half asleep. Brooding all the time. If you're brooding, where are the eggs?—oh, come on, Danny, that's a joke. Or baking bread. What is this, what are *you* doing baking bread? Or organizing the garage?—God knows in our twenty years in this house did you ever clean once without being nagged? Please. Honey. Call Rabbi Shulberger. Go work for the *hesed* committee. You've got so much to offer, Danny."

A YEAR ago last April they lost Gabe, their firstborn, a senior at Dartmouth—car crash late at night, someone else driving, too much to drink, Gabe asleep, killed instantly. He remembers calling the inn to cancel the reservations they'd made for the weekend of his graduation.

For months, coping meant being willing to get up in the morning. Meant being willing to bear looking at Shayna, making the loss real again by seeing it in her face. The thought of sex nauseated and depressed him. This made no sense, but it was true. He wrote in a notebook about Gabe, about the hole in the heart, but the cavity, cleaned out, left a bigger cavity, more decay. He remembered failures as a father—impatience, irritation, and how could he make reparations? Let's be honest: there were times with Gabe. . . . Oh, he was never like his own father, never roared his rage directly. The old rage, knotted up, got transmuted into judgment. The judgment

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in my eyes—Gabe suffered from that, surely. My lousy little failures of soul.

He prays. He also works out daily at the gym. He's bought an expensive single scull and rows on the Charles. He takes a course in Hasidism at the synagogue; they study the words of the Baal Shem Tov as written down by his disciples. Rabbi Shulberger explains *devekut*, cleaving with all of yourself to God: this is a state he can't imagine.

To keep occupied, he's begun day-trading in commodities, and he's performed consistently well, even in this bear market. When he meets someone at the gym, instead of saying, "I'm retired," he can say, "I'm a commodities trader." He's taken enough of an interest to read books on the mathematics of the markets. What a peculiar thing, not ever to lay eyes on the commodities he trades. He doesn't trade commodities at all, only paper certificates, and not even those but pixels on a screen representing mathematical curves. Fiction upon fiction.

Again and again these days, his father's heavy, worried face comes to him; he sees beads of sweat wiped away by a dirty handkerchief. He can almost smell his father's self-disgust. A couple of times when Daniel was in his teens, his father had gotten past snarling, past blaming other people, sat in his big red poppa chair and wept, blew his nose in that handkerchief. *Danny, you got a bum for a father!* In that guttural, raspy, tough-guy voice, not even his own voice but one he needed in order to let his guard down. A bum for a father. What did he mean a bum? Money. He meant money, that's all. He couldn't bring home enough money. At those times of self-exposure, Daniel would forget how much he hated the man, would sit on the edge of the chair, put his arm around his father's shoulder. *Dad, Dad, it's okay. . . .*

He'd been a tough, resisting boy. When his father yelled and threatened, Daniel fought back. He was always better with words; his father was afraid of his words. And Daniel could sense the last possible moment, the moment before his father would shove him or hit him, to retreat to his room, where he locked the door, shrank inside himself into a knot made of iron. Face down on his bed, he throttled, bit his pillow, tightened his jaw like a bulldog. And in this way Daniel lost the war, for he still has this knot of cold iron inside, has to lug all the rage of his father. Poor bastard, he says to himself, poor bastard, meaning his father, meaning himself.

When his father died, he hadn't been able to bring himself to say kaddish. He'd rationalize—what would it mean to Dad? Nothing. So now, as if in compensation, almost every day for the eleven prescribed months, he has said kaddish for his son.

Retire? How do you retire from your childhood? Here he is, a half-century later, still hiding in his room—now, his study—or in his mother's room. No meetings with the CEO, no reshuffling of the company's portfolio. No budget statements, no negotiations over lines of credit. He takes walks.

ON HIS walk along Walden Pond one late spring morning over a carpet of last year's leaves and new moss, he'd stopped and, staring at the water, staring at the pattern of tiny wind ripples, felt a dizziness that began in his stomach—like when a plane hits clear-air turbulence and suddenly drops fifty feet. It was like staring at one of those 3-D pictures that appear to be flat patterns of color but, gazed at in soft focus, suddenly melt and reveal a three-dimensional architecture to get lost in.

He closed his eyes as he was pulled in and through, traveling a tunnel of inner space that let him out as suddenly as it sucked him in. And there he was at the same water, pond's edge, staring. Same water, same trees in early green, but everything pulsing with its own intent, each fragment, bark, leaf, water expressing its own self, its special speech, to *his* self. Nothing to do with angels. Still, he imagined himself held by wings, tips of feathers framing his view of water, patterns of pollen on its surface, fallen tree, moss and lichen on damp rock. These very things.

It wasn't wholly unfamiliar. When he was getting his MBA at Harvard in the 70's people used to put on funny, prismatic glasses and pretend to be tripping. It was like that. Or like the day he found himself in a total eclipse of the sun without knowing it was happening, and the light grew thin and strange. Or remember what it was like to smoke dope? Say you're walking along a path through the woods. Stoned, you let the path lose its role as a way to get you from point A to point B. You almost lose the illusion of continuity and experience a series of separate moments that are—well, simply what they are.

He wasn't afraid that morning at Walden; in fact, he tried to intensify the vision. But that simply made him aware of the effort, and the numinous quality fell away. So over these months he's learned to breathe in what he sees, not to push it, and these are the times he really sees, his eyes and ears caressed the way a swimmer is caressed by water. There's a hum associated with this way of being, the blood in the ears perhaps, or a shimmer at the

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edges of things. His breath eases, deepens, as if he were asleep, but colors are more vibrant, and everything seems to sing about itself. He breathes deep and sits, and if, at these times, he thinks about Gabe, it isn't a terrible thing. Gabe enters as breath.

This vertigo he feels—what is it but the wooziness caused by the leap between worlds? When he was a child lying in the dark in a churning house, he'd float away from his parents' guttural whispered fights by burying his head under a pillow and staring at the window (apartment building across the courtyard, mauve light from city streets) until the window bent and shrank to the size of his thumbnail and he pulled back, afraid the window would become a pinhole and he himself tiny enough to pass through and away. Then there was the sound of a car horn or a cough or hissed curse from the other room, and he'd be back.

Now, if he shrinks himself down, first there's the vertigo and then he can almost enter the light. He has to become very small. He is barely there; Gabe is barely not-there. He strains to find the place where they both exist.

MORNINGS THIS fall, during the Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Daniel walks at Walden, but now he's taken to sitting on a rock off the path. He brings a cushion protected by a plastic bag and sits. He drifts off, returns. Nice here, uncomplicated. All through the previous month, then through the High Holy Days and until the end of Sukkot, they have been reciting Psalm 27 in the synagogue:

> One thing I asked of the Lord, one thing I shall seek
> To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. . . .
> He will hide me in His haven on an evil day.

Sounds like a good deal to him. This is the time of year when we're told to take stock, a time of turning. The year turns, we are to turn our lives toward God. But is he turning? Or is he simply hiding on an evil day? The thing about hiding is it brings you right back to what you're hiding from. Sitting, he sees Gabe—his beautiful face. At first, this brings peace. But only at first.

Mid-winter the year Gabe died, Daniel drove up to Dartmouth and spent a couple of days hanging out. He can't stand motels, so Gabe gave up his bed and slept on a camping mattress on the floor. Lying in the dark, Daniel asked about courses, about grad schools. They laughed about the dress Celia had chosen for her high-school prom. Lights from college paths played on the concrete-block walls, on the blown-up photo of FDR that Gabe had tacked up in his room at home just after his bar mitzvah. Before they said goodnight, Daniel said to him, "Gabe? It's been pretty great being your father." He knew it embarrassed Gabe to hear things like that, but he said it anyway.

There came a long silence. He hadn't expected that. It grew thicker, more dangerous. Half a minute. A minute. He sighed, he yawned, to break the silence. Gabe spoke.

"Dad? You know I love you a lot . . . but when I was a little kid, it wasn't always easy being your son."

"I was too hard on you?"

"Not that. No. Most of the time, you were so kind. But then I'd screw up in some way that bothered you, and you'd get choked up and not yell but get hard like a wall, hard as ice, Dad, your eyes so cold—you'd turn your face away, I couldn't reach you to make things right. After a while you'd be okay—for you it was over, but not for me. I'd be left holding a lot of stuff I couldn't put down anywhere. You've mellowed, you know. Gotten sweet in your old age—just kidding, just kidding. And . . . well, Dad, I know how to handle you."

"You always knew that," Daniel laughed. Then: "How come you never spoke about this?"

Gabe had no answer. Daniel knew better than to press.

From down the hall, ugly music. Thump, thump, thump of the bass. Laughter. He could hear Gabe trying to get comfortable on the camping mattress. It took a long time to get to sleep that night.

In the morning they embraced and Gabe went off to the library, Daniel drove home. And that was the last time he saw his son. Now he's left holding a lot of stuff, nowhere to put it down. He still speaks to Gabe, but does anyone answer? Can the vertigo take him to a place where they're both present? On the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, fasting all day in synagogue, he can't put it down, can't make it up.

IT'S THE first holiday season that Celia hasn't spent with the family; too busy with her studies to fly home, she attends services at Swarthmore. Maybe her absence makes Celia more of a presence for Daniel, for right after Sukkot he flies to see her. What's the good of being retired if he can't take off a couple of days? Why has it been so hard to call? Walking around Walden Pond, he says "Celia" into

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his voice-activated cell phone, but then kills the call. He sucks up a huge breath to quiet his heart. "Celia," he says again, as if he's angry at the phone.

She meets him at the Philadelphia airport, Swarthmore just a half-hour away. He enjoys it that she's the driver—pretty little blue used Corolla they bought for her—and he can relax and look over at her. He sees her freshly, as if she's not his child—tall as he, taller when sitting in the car, long-waisted as she is. She's bony-lean like Shayna, her eyes wonderfully clear, her beauty formed: a young woman. "I can't get over it."

She glances over at him. "Over Gabe? You can't get over Gabe, Dad?"

"No. No. I mean *you*—look at you, you're all grown up and lovely." She twists down the corner of her mouth, an old gag, and, without turning from the wheel, thumps him hard on the chest.

While she takes classes, he wanders—the Swarthmore campus another haven, specimen trees in full color. The gardens, fall-pruned, are sad, but the sky is clear and blue. He sits on newspapers on the damp lawn and watches breath pass through him, world to world. At her cross-country practice he puts on sneakers and runs alongside of her, but soon he's heaving breath and she leaves him behind.

Dinnertime, Celia takes him to the eating hall and introduces him to a blur of names and faces. They make a fuss over him, and since they don't know him from Adam it makes him feel that Celia is loved around here. Later, in the dark, bundled up against the cold evening, they walk to the library and she tells him about her courses, the a-cappella group she's joined, and later, both carrying books, they walk back to her dorm. She shows him a few papers. Over her bed is Gabe's blown-up photo of Roosevelt. On the opposite wall is a blown-up picture of Gabe.

Celia works at her desk. Her long black fuzzy hair is rolled up and pinned out of the way. He remembers Shayna getting tired of running after her with a hairbrush, Celia refusing to cut it off, him laughing, the mediator. Her roommate's staying with a friend tonight so he can have a bed. He sits on the bed trying to read, but gets stuck like an old phonograph needle on one passage. Thump of a bass, somebody's stereo; laughter from the hallway. Roosevelt, battered at the edges, above her bed, Gabe looking at him from the wall across. Tournament Frisbees form a pattern on one wall, a collage of ski posters on another—she and Gabe were both skiers from the time they were four or five. She looks up. "Dad? What is it? You look incredibly moony."

"Who, me?"

She turns from her computer screen to face him. "My pop. My soda pop." She does the old stuff—runs her fingers through his thinning hair, rubs his shoulder.

"I wonder, Celia. Do you ever feel in contact with him?" It's only after he's said this that he knows he's been rehearsing it all day.

"No."

"Never?"

"Sometimes I dream about him, but that's all."

"Good dreams?"

"Not bad ones. I can't remember. . . . You never used to talk like this."

"No?"

"And since Gabe died, do you know we've hardly talked about him at all? In fact . . . this whole visit is amazing to me. When you called, I got a little nervous. I'll tell you what I thought. That maybe Mom or you were really sick God forbid or something. Because we never talk."

"Celia? Gabe said I came down hard on him, judged him. He said I could get like ice."

"Well, maybe you were like that sometimes with Gabe—you know, fathers and sons? On me you were always easy."

As if he's praying, he rocks, rocks, to the thump of the bass. "Honey?" he says. "This is going to sound peculiar: I've been trying to reach him."

"What does that mean, Dad?"

He shakes his head as if it's impossible to say, then says, "If I can leave my self behind, maybe I can get to the place . . . where we're both present."

"Oh, Dad. Dad." She came over and hugged, hard, then held him at arm's length and looked into his eyes. "Have you talked to Mom about this?"

"A little."

"You ought to talk to Mom. She's lonely."

THE MORNING after his return, while Shayna sleeps, he goes back to Walden. Here, at the pond, sitting on a stump he's covered with a pillow, he can let things go. Maybe seeing Celia helped. It becomes soothing to breathe in morning light, brackish water, weave of currents and detritus on the pond surface, leaves of yellow and now burnished reds of oak obliterating the path—breathe them in so they seem permeated with their origin. It's as if he's a little drunk. The humming in his blood suffuses pond, leafy path. Under his ribs the tug of fear—he'll go too far, this self will disappear. And the opposite fear—this way of seeing will disappear.

He watches words, not his own, babbling through him, watches . . . nothing; there's no one to *do* the

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watching. As he sits, eyes shut, there's a vertiginous lifting; from above his body he can look down and see himself sitting, Daniel looking down at Daniel. He's above himself, outside the map. This is too much. At once—whoosh—he's back in his house of bones.

How long was he outside himself? A few seconds? No time at all? But he thinks about it all the time. In his office at home, playing with a pencil, he remembers, as if still from above, a sitting fool who's lost his son. Well, so many have lost their sons. *Kindertotenlieder*: songs of the death of children. But that doesn't make it inconsequential. Loss and loss, intensified by all the parents keening in chorus for all the children. He could have said this a year ago, ten years ago. But now, feeling part of one great wave of grief, he finds some of the burden lift: it's not merely his.

He can't stop replaying the moment. He sticks to his study or walks at the pond, shies away from Shayna, cancels lunch downtown with his old friend Morris Goldman. Why? Out of fear it might show? Out of fear he'll lose the understanding?

One afternoon, returning from the pond, he says hello to Shayna, just home from school, and stops in at his mother's room upstairs. But his mother's not there, or in the bathroom, or listening to music downstairs. Where could she be? Sometimes she takes a walk, but never alone. Hurrying downstairs, he calls, "Shayna, Shayna, where did Mom go?"

"She's not upstairs?" Shayna gets up from her laptop, and they hunt through the house. No Gertrude. No Gertrude anywhere. "She could have had a stroke," Shayna says. Then: "Don't panic," in a flat, frozen voice, her voice of panic. Daniel goes for his car; Shayna stays home to wait for a call.

Gertrude's usual walk, always with him or with Shayna, is two blocks away to a local park. She sits and feeds the ducks, pets the dogs. Not today. He reaches Shayna on his cell phone. No, she says, no one's called home. "Should we call the police?"

"Not yet. I'm heading up the road toward town."

He's still on the line with Shayna when he spots his mother standing at the black iron fence to the playground, leaning a little on her cane but looking fit and determined. "There she is. We'll be home in a couple of minutes." Daniel pulls alongside and lowers the window. "Ma? You want to get in, please?" He opens the door for her.

"Daniel. How nice. I thought I'd go find Celia in the playground." She points—the playground where Celia and Gabe used to swing and slide, fixed up now with colorful plastic play units but otherwise the same. "Your father and I haven't seen her all day."

He says, "Celia will be home soon, Ma. For Thanksgiving. We'll have a big turkey." He gets out of the car and stands by the entrance to the playground and looks.

She looks blankly, blankly; then her eyes take focus. She snorts. "Don't you condescend to me, Mister," she says, glaring, hands akimbo. "Don't you think I know where Celia is?" Now, thrusting up her chin, she's playing Rosalind Russell, Bette Davis. He's a boy again, and she's telling him a thing or two. "So, my son. You caught me in a little gap? At my age, that's permitted."

"Sorry, sorry, Ma."

"Look at the way the time goes, my darling." Softer, now. "Suppose I did slip into a slightly different time. So what? Don't be such a coward. That's just the way things are. Your father, before he died, half the time he was in another world. You couldn't talk sensibly to him for five minutes in his last years. And Celia was such a *lovely* little girl. Only this very morning wasn't she six years old? Look at her there—"

Gertrude points with her cane. Daniel follows. There's a girl with dark hair tied up in a pony tail, there on the swings. Trick of the eyes, trick of the light?—it's Celia, she's six years old, and the big boy pushing from behind, that's Gabe, age ten. It's my distance vision, playing games. But Daniel doesn't want to lose it. He knows, doesn't he, that Celia's a young woman at Swarthmore, outside Philadelphia? But he knows, too, that all he has to do is leave his mother, walk into the playground, and, if he doesn't look back, he'll find them there, age ten, age six.

Instantly, as if he were only in a reasonable, shared world, he says, "Ma? She's *still* lovely."

Gertrude picks up on the last word. "And what about your mother?" She lifts her penciled, Rosalind Russell eyebrows at him. She presents him with her face, as if it were a portrait of herself. There!

"Oh, lovely, too."

"Well? Am I *not* a bit of all right?" They laugh together. He takes her arm and leads her to the car. Just before she steps in, they both look back at the girl on the swing, the boy pushing. She nods. She sits down in his car, the *grande dame*, and says to her chauffeur, "Home, Mister."

SHAYNA's making out reports for the Department of Social Services. She's sitting over her laptop, papers spread out on the dining-room table, and looks at him over her glasses, perched halfway down her nose.

"You know what?" she says when he tells her about the playground, "I feel that way all the time,

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Danny. That's just our ordinary loss of children. Our little girl Celia—that terrific sweetness, remember?—playing on those swings?" She takes off her glasses and folding them neatly, places them on her papers. "Listen, I know, I should count my blessings that Celia has grown up into a marvelous adult, and I do—but I still miss that little girl. So. Your poor mother. Time crumples up for her? Maybe she's lucky."

"What I'm thinking is—you know—well, maybe it's a form of communication?"

"Oh, baby." Shayna pulls off her computer glasses and stands up as if she were to meet a friend coming to the door. "Oh." She looks at him with her clear, severe look, then, softening, puts her arms around his neck. "You mean a message from Gabe using your mother? Danny? Is that what you mean?"

"I didn't say that at all," Dan says, face hot. He tries to slacken, but the fortress of bones keeps resisting. At this moment he deeply understands what he has always known, that in this terrible time he has her, has had her all the way—but what in God's name does she have? He makes himself hug back.

The next afternoon he drives back to the playground. The big kids are still at school; only little ones, two of them, are playing on the colorful plastic climbs and slides. Their mothers, standing nearby, talk together. It's a sunny day; bundled in sweater and parka, he's buffered against the cold.

HE SITS on a wooden platform—part of a structure where big kids climb—cross-legged, his back against an upright. It's like a giant chair, like the chair on which Alice sat. He closes his eyes. In his mind's eye he can see the old equipment, heavy aluminum, where Gabe and Celia swung, slid, seesawed, spun. And then, as he opens his eyes, well, there are these hoops of light to be considered. What about them? Each of them might be an angel . . . or just a trick of perception. Hoops of luminescence float or seem to float, and the objects themselves are surrounded by this pulsing light, as if light loved the things of this world.

It's making him dizzy. Gone limp inside, he isn't breathing but being breathed. His face hot with blood, head humming with blood, a high-pitched keening. The leaves are falling. He knows that.

Gabe—why, Gabe is just through those trees over there. So he takes a little walk. He knows he can join his son just past the trees. But trees, they just give way to trees. A path into the conservation area, and beyond the little woods, a wooden barn and hayfield. There's nobody conserved in these woods. He might get small and small, might dissipate his being and then—what if there's nothing, or nothing like a son? Suppose his eyes blur with tears, with light; instead of Gabe, all there is is light's confusion. Just some father, some body, that's all, stumbling through piles of yellow, orange, red maple leaves drying in the late fall sun. Leaves fall, adding vertigo to vertigo, until they make a bed for someone.

Crumpling the dry leaves, he lies down in his bones until the dizziness passes, but then it's so comforting to lie here on this bed that he closes his eyes and sleeps. No angels, no children, and all the scattered energy of light calms down like the leaves. It's okay here. Leaves like feathers.

Don't worry; in a while he'll get up. He remembers where he lives. He'll go home, and if Shayna's lonely, sitting at her laptop, he'll try to comfort her. The leaves are like camouflage; sunlight of late afternoon speckles the leaves and, past the woods, barn and hayfield. Soon, Daniel will step back inside the map, lug his bones home.

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OBSERVATIONS

Iraq: Prophets of Defeat

Gabriel Schoenfeld

A "CATASTROPHIC SUCCESS" is what the *New York Times* has called it. The American military conquered Baghdad within an astonishing 21 days, defeating the largest Arab army at the price of only 117 American lives. But then our forces became bogged down in what, according to innumerable accounts, soon devolved into a bloody quagmire. The Bush administration, it is by now widely accepted, has conducted the second, occupation phase of the war disastrously, and the disaster has shown no sign of letting up.

In the run-up to the November election, as the chorus of critics grew ever more incessant, something like a conventional wisdom began to emerge. Its main lines went like this. The military forces deployed by the Pentagon, sufficient though they may have been to shatter the Iraqi army and capture Baghdad, have been grossly insufficient in dealing with the aftermath. The widespread pillaging following the fall of Saddam's regime was the first clear indicator of trouble lying ahead. Soon, right under the noses of American soldiers, the looting accelerated into general disorder, and general disorder then coalesced into organized insurgency.

That is hardly the end of it. The initial error of deploying too few troops was compounded by the administration's absurdly mistaken belief that the invasion would be welcomed by the Iraqi populace—a hope based, according to the Harvard political scientist Stanley Hoffmann in the *New York Review of Books*, "on a mixture of ignorance, hubris, and misinformation." This mistake proved to be another "unexpected boon to insurgents, since the U.S. forces could not deal with the acute problems that were inevitable in a partly devastated country."

Next, dissolving the Iraqi army and banning Baathists from power provided a generous stream of recruits to the insurgency. As too few American soldiers struggled to pacify a chaotic, war-torn land, morale among the troops began to plummet. It hardly helped that some reservists were required to extend their tours of duty. Given the hardship and fear, instances of insubordination in the ranks soon multiplied. Eventually there were reports of entire units disobeying orders, with soldiers refusing to drive in resupply convoys along treacherous routes.

Finally, there was Abu Ghraib, the prison where poorly trained, poorly supervised soldiers engaged in vicious abuse of Iraqi prisoners. The genesis of *that* notorious incident, explains the journalist Seymour Hersh in his new book, *Chain of Command*,* lay "not in the criminal inclinations of a few Army reservists" but in decisions made in high reaches of the Pentagon and the White House.

In short, the occupation has both largely discredited itself and brought disgrace upon America. By early November, with the battle for Falluja under way, with still other major cities remaining in the control of insurgents, with daily car bombings directed at Iraqi policemen and American troops, with even the Green Zone, the supposedly super-secure U.S.-controlled administrative district in the center of Baghdad, subjected to daily mortar attacks and bombings—above all, with more than 1,100 American servicemen and women dead and many more injured—the war policy of the Bush

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*HarperCollins, 416 pp., $25.95.

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administration lay in tatters, and the prospects for fair elections in Iraq, let alone for establishing liberal democracy in that ethnically fractured country, remained a distant dream.

OR so the critics have contended. Not all of these critics, it is necessary to add, are on the political Left (though most are). In addition to figures like Hoffmann, Hersh, the *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, and many others, one can point to a number of skeptical or disaffected conservatives like Andrew Sullivan and George F. Will; in October, Richard Lowry, the editor of *National Review*, took to the pages of his magazine with a qualified but still dismal tale of "gross intelligence failures, debilitating intramural battles, miscommunications, unintended consequences, and counterproductive half-measures."

That the picture drawn by the critics is a partial one should go without saying. They neither dwell on nor, usually, even mention the many things that have gone spectacularly well in Iraq, let alone the large number of things that *could* have gone very badly—and that were predicted to go very badly—but did not. Filling out the picture, not only by supplying the missing pieces but also by refuting specific arguments advanced by critics of the administration, would leave a very different picture of our progress in that country. But here I want to pursue a somewhat different line of inquiry, asking in effect how the critics could possibly be so certain in their conclusion of overall failure. To put it another way: when they pronounce this verdict, what is their standard of judgment? Failure as compared to what?

In order to address that question fairly, we need to look not at some idealized model of a perfectly successful military campaign, a campaign that one might wage in one's head, but at other military campaigns at similar points in their unfolding. How have other wars gone, especially wars that have ended *well*?

American participation in World War II is Exhibit A in most people's conception of a military campaign waged with maximum concentration of forces and maximum coherence of purpose. In some respects, to be sure, juxtaposing the two conflicts might appear to be a stretch: in Iraq we are now engaged in a clean-up operation against terrorists and insurgents, not attempting to subdue a major power like Nazi Germany. But the parallel should not be lightly dismissed. Indeed, the very differences between the two situations accentuate the value of the exercise.

This is particularly so if one concentrates on the last stages of World War II. For in late 1944 and until Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, the U.S. was in its military prime, battle-hardened, united at home as never before, and fighting a war that might justly be called a supreme national emergency. If things nevertheless went badly awry in the endgame of the "good war" fought by the "greatest generation," might that not suggest the folly of entering summary judgments concerning the more ambiguous conflict in which we are now engaged?

MAX HASTINGS is one of the leading historians of World War II—and these days, as it happens, a vociferous critic on political grounds of the American intervention in Iraq. His new book, *Armageddon*,* attempts to answer a fundamental question: how did the Nazi regime manage to hang on as long as it did while facing such a formidable coalition? In 1944, with the Red Army advancing inexorably from the east and Britain and the United States from the west, the Third Reich should by all rights have collapsed. Instead, it managed to survive for another winter and spring of ferocious fighting. Why?

One thing Hastings makes crystal clear is that progress on Germany's western front was gravely impeded by Allied choices. Perhaps the most consequential of these choices had to do with troop strength. The Americans, writes Hastings, had "woefully underestimated the size of the force that would be needed to defeat Hitler," and the consequent shortage of troops—"a ground army far smaller than [the U.S.] population would have allowed"—repeatedly plagued the Allied effort. In the end, it was the huge number of Russian soldiers, ordered into battle by a brutal dictator, who did the "main business of destroying Hitler's armies," and who paid the price for it. More than 200,000 Americans died in the European theater, as compared with a staggering eleven to thirteen million Soviet soldiers.

How well did we anticipate the actions and intentions of the enemy? In late 1944, even after years of battlefield contact, the U.S. would seem to have been almost as much in the dark as it is said to be now in Iraq. At the time, writes Hastings, the Allies were in possession of intelligence showing that German forces were being transferred in great numbers from the eastern to the western front. They also had ample evidence, including from intercepted communications, that the enemy was assembling in the Ardennes forest. But when the Germans launched their mass offensive in the Ardennes on December 16, the Americans and the British were taken completely by surprise. As a result of this intelligence lapse, what came to be called the Battle of the Bulge claimed more than 10,000 American dead, another 47,000 maimed, and some 23,000 captured.

How had the Allies missed the obvious? Their "most conspicuous error," Hastings explains, "was to expect rational strategic behavior from their enemy." He attributes this error to, in a resonant term, "over-confidence."

* *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945*. Knopf, 640 pp., $30.00.

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What about troop morale? In the winter of 1944, in the face of fierce combat, "Allied fighting strength was . . . eroded by the loss of *thousands* of men who simply quit" (emphasis added). Hastings adduces an astonishing statistic: at the beginning of 1945 "the U.S. provost-marshal acknowledged that more than 18,000 American deserters were roaming the ETO [European Theater of Operations]," the equivalent, he notes, of several divisions. Having "disappeared from their units to become scavengers," these men "became familiar flotsam in every urban area of western Europe."

Conduct toward enemy soldiers and civilians? Although American soldiers in Europe were by and large civilized in their treatment of the German populace and captured troops—and untainted by the sort of hatred typically directed at the Japanese in the Pacific theater—American (and British) honor was hardly without blemish. There was, to begin with, heavy looting of German treasure, both public and private. Worse, there was widespread rape of civilian women—nothing like what the Russians were doing to German women in the east but sufficiently acute to prompt General Dwight D. Eisenhower to contemplate the public execution of American perpetrators. There were also abuses of POW's, and not just in a few isolated cases. Far from being "a uniquely German practice," writes Hastings, "dealing summarily with captives"—i.e., killing them—was done by Americans as well.

Hastings's objective is hardly to relativize Nazi wrongdoing. He stresses, for example, that the Nazis committed crimes against both POW's and civilians that are without parallel in history. But he is at pains to establish the record, and the record shows not only that America in World War II committed monumental blunders in the field but that some American soldiers perpetrated extreme and horrific deeds.

Nor does Hastings, in a narrative confined to the last year of the war, tell us anything like the whole story on these various scores. A fuller account of the conflict over its duration would regale us with statistics of needless combat deaths in far higher numbers, grisly tales of American soldiers ill-fed and unequipped or underequipped for battle, strategic and tactical errors of surpassing obtuseness, and much more. Surely, one might think, the scale of such transgressions should have been enough to discredit the officers in the field, the military brass at the War Department, the civilian leadership in the White House—indeed, the entire effort.

Of course it did not. Many of the misdeeds of World War II were not widely known at the time, and even if they had been, it would likely have had no bearing whatsoever on the perceived righteousness of the war. This, indeed, is the real difference between then and now, when much less egregious transgressions are considered more than sufficient to proclaim the utter wrongness of the war against Saddam Hussein.

The reasons for this difference are themselves no mystery. One of them has to do with the advent of televised combat, which, in depicting war in something like its true gruesomeness, has tended to heighten the American aversion to casualties and by extension to war in general. Another is the adversarial culture that infects much of the media, along with the by now reflexive habit among many liberals and leftists of reaching for the lowest possible explanation of American motives and intentions. And then, in the case of specific critics of the war, there is also the more or less explicitly political agenda that lies at the heart of their analysis.

Richard Lowry is a conspicuous exception in this regard. He, at least, makes a point of noting that some of the administration's missteps were "the result of the inevitable uncertainties and surprises of warfare." His well-reported analysis also has the virtue of explaining how the errors he documents were the almost inevitable outcome of "a series of choices that could never be entirely right."

But such fair-minded judgments are rare. Stanley Hoffmann, for example, was someone opposed from the outset to the decision to remove Saddam Hussein. The "central U.S. aim," he argued then, was to build an American empire in which Iraq would be turned "into a U.S.-dominated satellite, with American bases, American companies in charge of its oil, and a compliant regime." It is thus no surprise that, after we went in, he wanted us to get out, and fast. Toward that objective he began assiduously amassing all the supposedly "good reasons for calling an end to the occupation," an enterprise that has involved him in indiscriminately tarring not only Washington but Washington's friends, especially Israel.

Seymour Hersh also has an agenda; its ends are similar to Hoffmann's, but its means are less savory. In the first phase of the Iraq war, Hersh, reporting for the *New Yorker*, distinguished himself by his unbridled pessimism concerning the course of battle. Even as American forces were successfully carrying out one of the most breathtakingly rapid and successful thrusts in the history of warfare, his first dispatch began: "As the ground campaign against Saddam Hussein faltered last week, with attenuated supply lines and a lack of immediate reinforcements, there was anger in the Pentagon."

When Baghdad fell within days of this piece's appearance, Hersh immediately began to shift ground: "The Bush administration, it turned out, had won a major battle, but still had a war to fight." That war is the continuing occupation, and Hersh has long since pronounced its certain doom and the terrible consequences that will follow from it. *Chain of Command* is advertised by its publisher as nothing less than a "devastating portrait of an administration blinded by

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ideology and of a President who has made the world a more dangerous place for America."

It would be more accurate to say that Hersh is an author blinded by ideology, and that his objective is to present an America as dangerous as he is capable of making it appear. Indeed, where his book itself is insufficient for that purpose, Hersh has seemed quite prepared to go beyond it. On the lecture circuit (we learn from the *New York Observer*), he has offered up gory details of alleged U.S. atrocities in Iraq that are truly appalling. Thus, quoting one of his anonymous "sources," a soldier in the field, Hersh informed one audience that

> orders came down from the generals in Baghdad: we want to clear the village, like in Samarra. And, as [the soldier] told the story, another platoon from his company came and executed all the guards, as his people were screaming, "Stop!" And he said they just shot them one by one. He went nuts, and his soldiers went nuts. . . . And the company captain said, "No, you don't understand. That's a kill. We got 36 insurgents."

Without a doubt, a massacre so reminiscent of My Lai is a sensational allegation. Without a doubt, it is almost certainly false, a fabrication cavalierly pawned off by Hersh as fact. An army of foreign journalists in Iraq, not exactly diffident when it comes to exposing American abuses, has thus far failed to unearth a single corroborating bit of evidence for this "atrocity," and the U.S. military has no reports from the field attesting to an incident even faintly resembling it. Is this a critic whose views, let alone whose facts, are to be trusted on anything?

INFORMATION ABOUT how our fight in Iraq is proceeding is necessarily difficult to assess. It comes to us filtered through a variety of cloudy if not, as in the case of Hersh, altogether occluded lenses. But this is nothing new; radical uncertainty is the essence of warfare, and the ability to navigate through that uncertainty is the art of generalship. Even though the Battle of the Bulge ended in a resounding defeat for Nazi Germany and spelled the certain end of Hitler's regime, the American and British victors had little immediate appreciation of that fact. To the contrary, Hastings reports, the German capacity to have mounted so fierce an offensive provoked "despondency" and a "resurgence of caution" in the Allied high command. In the beginning of 1945, just as the Third Reich was crumbling, the Western powers began vastly to overestimate the size and strength of the arms arrayed against them. They also began to move their own forces into "strong defensive positions" lest the Germans counterattack again. Four months later, against their expectations, Germany surrendered unconditionally.

In Iraq, success may not come four months from now (though it might), but the contention that we have *already* failed is blazingly ignorant where it is not outright malicious. In listening to today's prophets of defeat, it helps to keep in mind that some are suffering from a severe case of self-induced amnesia about what war is and what fighting a war entails. Others, who know better, are opposed not only to the war in Iraq but to American purposes more generally, and to American success most of all.

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MUSIC

After Pavarotti

Terry Teachout

WHO WAS the most significant opera singer of the second half of the 20th century? The question, of course, is unanswerable. But ask who had the most significant *career*, and there can be only one possible answer: Luciano Pavarotti. Along with Leonard Bernstein, Van Cliburn, and Vladimir Horowitz, the Italian tenor was among the handful of postwar classical musicians whose name was generally known to the public at large. Though he retired from the operatic stage last March—he will continue to appear in concert until he turns seventy next October—he remains a star.

Now Pavarotti is the subject of a tell-all memoir by Herbert Breslin, his former manager and publicist. Written in collaboration with the music critic Anne Midgette, *The King and I: The Uncensored Tale of Luciano Pavarotti's Rise to Fame by His Manager, Friend, and Sometime Adversary* dishes up a generous helping of the gossip that its subtitle promises.[1] If you long to know all about Pavarotti's compulsive eating and womanizing, *The King and I* is the book to read.

Renée Fleming's *The Inner Voice: The Making of a Singer*, by contrast, is as decorous as the author herself, who in the past decade has become the best-known American opera singer of her generation.[2] Instead of recounting the travails of her private life (which include a painful divorce), she has chosen instead to concentrate on purely professional matters:

> As I set about my education as a singer, I devoured the autobiographies of my predecessors, hoping to find the kind of advice that would improve my singing, but mostly what I found were entertaining accounts of celebrated lives. . . . I searched for such a long time for the book I wanted to read that finally I decided my only recourse was to try to write it myself.

At first glance, it would seem that these two singers have little in common except their celebrity. Unlike the unschooled, incurious Pavarotti, who never sang art songs or modern classical music, and who found it all but impossible to learn new operatic roles of any kind, Fleming has appeared in contemporary opera (she created the role of Blanche DuBois in André Previn's operatic version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*) and is widely admired for her song recitals. Yet to read *The King and I* and *The Inner Voice* in tandem is to be reminded that, like all of today's opera singers, she too lives in the shadow of her older colleague. No singer in our time has done more to reshape the face of major-house opera than Pavarotti, for better or—mostly—for worse.

HOW GOOD was Pavarotti? Will he be remembered a century from now, as we remember such indisputably great tenors of the past as Enrico Caruso, Beniamino Gigli, or Lauritz Melchior? Possibly, but not necessarily.

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[1] Doubleday, 308 pp., $25.95.

[2] Viking, 222 pp., $24.95. Although no collaborator is credited on the dust jacket, it is evident from the acknowledgements that Fleming wrote *The Inner Voice* together with the novelist Ann Patchett.

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To be sure, he was in his prime a remarkable singer, without doubt the foremost lyric tenor of his day, and well beyond his fiftieth year his luminous, pointed tone and crisp diction retained much of their quality. On the other hand, Pavarotti was never a distinctive interpreter, and his acting was at best barely competent. Instead, he cultivated an expansive, outgoing manner ("He plays the part of being Pavarotti with succulent delectation," Nicolas Slonimsky quipped) that charmed his listeners at the expense of the dramatic credibility of the operas in which he appeared.

As a result, he had less and less to offer once the natural beauty of his voice began to succumb to advancing age. As I wrote in a *New York Daily News* review of a recital he gave eight years ago at the Metropolitan Opera House:

> Vocally speaking, Pavarotti is no longer consistently comfortable above high A, and moves from soft singing to loud only with audible grinding of gears (he doesn't have much of anything in between). . . . Why does this matter? Because Pavarotti has nothing to offer *but* his voice. Most singers who perform into their old age do so in order to share new musical insights. But Pavarotti's artistry has not deepened with age, nor has he shown any serious interest in exploring unfamiliar repertoire.

I enjoyed seeing Pavarotti on stage and in concert as late as the early 90's, but I cannot claim to have found his performances illuminating, and for the most part his studio recordings lacked the imaginative idiosyncrasy needed to make them truly memorable.[3] Yet it was at that precise moment that he succeeded in establishing himself as the world's most popular opera singer.

WHAT MADE him stand out from the crowd? Herbert Breslin supplies the answer in *The King and I*, and while it is self-serving, it is also correct. Pavarotti's unique popular success was made possible by shrewd promotion. An unabashed vulgarian with a knack for salesmanship, Breslin handled Pavarotti less as an artist than as a product:

> I kept him in front of the public with one performance, one event, one "first" after another. First U.S. recital, first "Live from the Met" broadcast, first solo recital from the Metropolitan Opera stage, first American Express commercial, first solo concert in a 20,000-seat arena. . . . I brought that tenor out of the opera house and into the arms of an enormous mass public.

Breslin was not the first promoter to use the mass media to sell classical music; opera singers had been hiring publicists as far back as the 30's. Nor was he the first to recognize that for singers, the big money was not in opera, with its limited per-service fees and high overhead, but in solo concerts, where the artist performs for a percentage of the gate. What made Breslin exceptional was his ambition—and his good timing.

When Breslin and Pavarotti began working together, it was still possible to get classical musicians into the pages of *Time* and *Newsweek* and on TV programs like *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Recognizing that his client's rough charm made him a natural for mass marketing, Breslin promoted him as aggressively as "a bar of soap," working closely with Decca/London, the tenor's record label, which hawked his albums no less energetically.

Not all of Breslin's ideas worked. Pavarotti's appearance in the feature film *Yes, Giorgio* (1982), for instance, was disastrous. And as the 70's gave way to the 80's, it became steadily harder to get the tenor, or any other classical musician, on network TV. But by then he had become sufficiently well known to sell out such huge arenas as New York's Madison Square Garden. When the Hungarian promoter Tibor Rudas had the idea of presenting him in concert with Placido Domingo and José Carreras, billing the group as "The Three Tenors," Pavarotti no longer had to rely on TV—or on Herbert Breslin. He had become a self-sustaining media phenomenon.

PAVAROTTI'S APPEARANCES and recordings with the Three Tenors, though of negligible artistic value, were not in and of themselves a bad thing. Here is what I wrote of them in 1996:

> In a way, the Three Tenors are the closest thing we have to the lost middlebrow culture. Far coarser in their approach than, say, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops (that quintessential middlebrow institution), they are still capable of lifting aspiring music lovers from a more debased level of culture to a less debased one.[4]

But as was to be demonstrated by the rest of Pavarotti's later career, the Three Tenors phenomenon also had an unintended consequence: inflating the commercial expectations of the recording industry to a dangerous degree. The major classical labels thereafter sought to reproduce the unprecedented success of the Three Tenors by "encouraging" their top artists to record "crossover" versions of popular music (Pavarotti was a prime offender) and similar projects meant to reap maximum short-term profit.

This fateful shift in emphasis, coupled with the equally unforeseen effects of digital recording and web-based file sharing, led in a few short years to the implosion of the classi-

[3] Two notable exceptions are the spectacularly sung performance of Donizetti's *La Fille du régiment* that he recorded in 1968 with the soprano Joan Sutherland (Decca/London 414 520-2, two CD's) and a 1974 recording of a Puccini opera, *Madama Butterfly*, whose interpretative distinction is in large part a function of the conductor, Herbert von Karajan (Decca/London 417 577-2, three CD's).

[4] "Battle of the Brows," COMMENTARY, October 1996, reprinted in *A Terry Teachout Reader* (Yale).

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cal recording industry. The long-term effects of this development will be of incalculable significance in the immediate future, since recordings were the engine that drove the international star system on which the culture of classical music had hitherto been based.[5]

In *The Inner Voice*, Renée Fleming describes the realities of a post-Pavarotti singing career. A "heavy" lyric soprano whose core repertoire consists of the operas of Mozart and Richard Strauss, Fleming is one of the last classical singers to have been signed by Decca/London, Pavarotti's label. A beautiful woman with a warm, engaging offstage personality, Fleming was an ideal candidate for mass marketing, and though her artistic priorities could hardly have been more different from those of Pavarotti, she was handled by her promoters in similar ways.

Matthew Epstein, Fleming's manager, pushed her to restrict her wide-ranging repertoire so as to make her more attractive to opera companies; Mary Lou Falcone, her publicist, sought to place her on a "steady upward trajectory" of media exposure. Like Pavarotti (though for different reasons), Fleming then began to cut back on opera in favor of concert appearances, and Decca/London capitalized on the success of these events by releasing a series of glamorously packaged recital CD's with such titles as *By Request* and *The Beautiful Voice*.

So far, Fleming has managed to steer clear of at least some of the pitfalls that can befall so aggressively marketed a singer. As she proudly explains in *The Inner Voice*:

> If I wanted to capitalize on my commercial potential entirely, I would sing only the most popular classical arias, not in their original forms, but arranged stylistically to fit everything from techno to Hollywood film music. I would sing even less opera, and then only Italian opera and not the lesser-known Strauss and French rarities that I adore. I would tour only my recordings in pursuit of ever larger sales, rather than performing world premieres and the concert repertoire of Strauss, Berg, and Schoenberg.

All this is true—and that she has tried to resist the trap of marketing is admirable. Yet, as Fleming herself suggests, she may have paid a price for not resisting harder. "These days," she writes, "it sometimes feels as if I spend more of my time on the logistics of singing than I do on the art and performance of it." Might this preoccupation be affecting her artistry? In recent years, it seems to me, Fleming's singing has not developed, either expressively or technically, in the ways once expected of it, to the point where one can no longer be certain that she will become a truly great singer (as opposed to an exceptionally good one). Whether this can be attributed to the heavy emphasis she and her handlers have placed on career development cannot be known—but neither can the possibility be discounted.

Renée Fleming continues to make much of her great gifts. But *The Inner Voice* suggests that she knows there are limits to what she can hope to achieve in the diminished world of post-Pavarotti opera.

The major houses where Fleming sings, after all, rarely if ever produce the new operas she longs to perform, just as Decca/London no longer records new full-length performances of the older works in which she most frequently appears.[6] And though her publicists continue to make heroic efforts to get her on network TV and into national magazines, the media long ago stopped paying more than cursory attention to the fine arts, making it unlikely that she will ever attain more than a fraction of Luciano Pavarotti's singular celebrity.

As for Pavarotti himself, his day is nearly done, and all that remains is for posterity to render its final verdict. It may be that my own judgment of his singing will ultimately prove too harsh, and that he will indeed be remembered as one of the great voices of the 20th century. But no matter what tomorrow's listeners make of his recordings, they will also have to reckon with the other part of his legacy: the effect that he and his promoters have had on the culture of classical music.

Herbert Breslin sums up that effect in his characteristically crude manner:

> This book is really the story of two people who came from nowhere. I started out with nothing and worked my way to the very top of this little pissant business and helped change it and alter its limits and redefine the way people see it. Luciano started with nothing and became the most famous opera singer of a generation.

So they did. And so it was that a "little pissant business" that for five centuries had been one of the supreme glories of Western culture suddenly became inflated beyond recognition, then popped like a toy balloon filled with too much hot air. Needless to say, Breslin and his most famous client made out like bandits before the bubble burst. As for the rest of us—including, alas, Renée Fleming—we can expect to live in the wreckage they left behind for a long time to come.

[5] I have written about this in a series of pieces for Commentary, the most recent of which is "Why Listening Will Never Be the Same" (September 2002). "Life Without Records," a longer essay based on these pieces, is included in the *Teachout Reader*.

[6] *Signatures: Great Opera Scenes*, Fleming's 1996 debut album for London, contains scenes and arias by Mozart, Dvořák, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss, and Benjamin Britten that give a clear idea of her promise (Decca/London 455 760-2). Of comparable interest is *I Want Magic!: American Opera Arias*, conducted by James Levine, which contains selections from Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*, Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Bernard Herrmann's *Wuthering Heights*, Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Decca/London 460 567-2).

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"One Land for Two Peoples"

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and "Israel proper." The slogan is "One Land for Two Peoples."

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their "intifadas," the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the "Arab womb," the motto being: "If we can't defeat them in war, let's outbreed them." And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a "binational" state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

> "The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance..."

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that the Jews are "occupiers" is a notion that has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Moslems. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Moslems against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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Books in Review

In Nazi Newark

The Plot Against America
by Philip Roth
Houghton Mifflin. 400 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Ruth R. Wisse

IT ONCE seemed as though Philip Roth had come on the American scene too late to have any compelling historical subject with which to engage his literary powers. Born in 1933 to a decent, hard-working Jewish family in Newark, New Jersey, he missed out on the formative deprivations of the immigrant experience and the great Depression, as well as on membership in "the greatest generation" that fought in World War II. As a writer, too, he came along after Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and an earlier Roth—the redoubtable Henry—had pioneered an "American Jewish literature" that was richly flavored in the brine of their native Yiddish.

In his fiction, Roth acknowledged his status as a latecomer by casting himself as the perennial son. Still, he found ways of turning his generation's inexperience into epic adventure. His first book, the collection *Goodbye, Columbus* (1957), touched a nerve in Jewish readers who recognized (however painfully) their own foibles in its satire, and it also caught the fancy of a broader public that was getting used to the Jewish presence in American fiction. Much like Ozzie Freeman, the boy in one of Roth's stories who threatens suicide in order to force his rabbi to admit that God *could* have brought about a virgin birth, the young author had the chutzpah to provoke attention.

One of the ways that Roth compensated for the thinness of his experience was to run riot with the possibilities of fiction itself. His breakthrough into fame came with *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), the on-the-couch comic monologues of a psychoanalytic patient who is to sex as Pete Rose is to baseball. Had Franz Kafka turned one of his protagonists into an insect? Roth went Kafka one better by turning one of his into a female breast. Did Alfred Hitchcock insinuate himself into each of his films? Roth wrote many novels disguising himself as the narrator. Why tell the story of a life one way when, as the author of *The Counterlife* (1986), you can tell the story one way *and* another way? In book after book, Roth has violated the boundaries of fact and fiction with the boldness of a smuggler on the Mexican border. None of the many prizes he has received for his work—including the National Medal of Arts, a Pulitzer Prize, and two National Book Awards—may be as welcome to him as the eagerness that has greeted his every act of talented transgression.

IN *The Plot Against America*, Roth claims for himself the significant historical moment that he missed out on in real life. Here, he tells the story of his childhood as it *would* have happened had Charles A. Lindbergh become the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1940 and then gone on to defeat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in that year's election. Instead of the feeling of pro-

RUTH R. WISSE *teaches Yiddish and comparative literature at Harvard. She is currently completing a book on Jews and power.*

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tectedness enjoyed by American Jews under Roosevelt, the fictional Roths of this novel, along with all the Jews in their neighborhood, are subjected to a candidate who has an "understanding" with Hitler, to the panic induced by his election, and to the consequences of an American administration with Nazi sympathies.

This is not the first time that Roth has used his actual family—his father Herman, his mother Bess, an older brother, and himself, Philip—as protagonists of his fiction. But it is the first time he has invented for them a landscape of menace akin to the one experienced by their fellow Jews in Europe. In a rare explanatory essay about his creative intentions, Roth has written that he chose the Lindbergh character, or rather the Lindbergh character "chose himself," as a "leading political figure in a novel where I wanted America's Jews to feel the pressure of a genuine anti-Semitic threat."

Roth sets up his plot in his trademark film-script tempo:

> When the first shock came in June of 1940—the nomination for the presidency of Charles A. Lindbergh, America's international aviation hero, by the Republican convention at Philadelphia—my father was thirty-nine, an insurance agent with a grade-school education, earning a little under fifty dollars a week, enough for the basic bills to be paid on time but for little more. My mother—who'd wanted to go to teachers' college but couldn't because of the expense, who'd lived at home working as an office secretary after finishing high school, who'd kept us from feeling poor during the worst of the Depression by budgeting the earnings my father turned over to her each Friday as efficiently as she ran the household—was thirty-six. My brother, Sandy, a seventh-grader with a prodigy's talent for drawing, was twelve, and I, a third-grader a term ahead of himself—and an embryonic stamp collector inspired like millions of kids by the country's foremost philatelist, President Roosevelt—was seven.

Compressed into this paragraph is a description of the main cast of characters, including those biographical details that will feature prominently in the novel's development. Except for the most obvious one: this all-American family is, incidentally, Jewish—incidentally, that *is, until President Lindbergh turns* their Jewishness into an offense.

Not everybody in the Roth household and its surrounding neighborhood reacts to the new order of things in the same way. Unlike the Jewish fathers in works by Franz Kafka and Isaac Babel who shame their sons by submitting to Gentile hostility, Herman Roth is a "Loudmouth Jew" who sounds off in public against the administration. A nephew and ward of the family goes off to Canada to enlist in the war against Hitler. But, as opposed to these "proud Jews," there is also Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf, a quisling figure who assures Americans, *as a Jew*, that Charles Lindbergh has been wise to keep the country out of the European conflict: "How will the cruel fate that has befallen [the Jews of Germany] be alleviated by our great country going to war with their tormentors?" Bengelsdorf's secretary, then wife, is Philip's Aunt Evelyn; she advances the Lindbergh agenda by sending Philip's brother Sandy off to Kentucky to a reeducation program named "Just Folks," there to be turned into a proper Gentile. Later, when Philip feels oppressed by the cloying presence of a Jewish boy downstairs, Aunt Evelyn arranges to have the offending child and his widowed mother relocated to Kentucky as well. In some of their victims, repressive regimes inspire rebellion, in others mutual betrayal.

BY EXPOSING "his" and other Jewish families to the scenario of an encroaching Nazism and its sympathizers, Philip Roth has produced his most suspenseful novel to date—according to the raves, a "page-turner," "a devourable tale," "riveting from the first sentence." Our knowledge that, in Europe, families like his *were* dragged off to their deaths makes us eager to know what will happen here, and how. Will the real-life good guys in the novel, like the liberal columnist Walter Winchell and New York's mayor, Fiorello La Guardia, win out over the imaginary villains like Lindbergh's Vice President Wheeler, who impose on the Jews a low-grade reign of terror? Will Philip get hurt? Will his father and mother be able to protect their family until the danger has passed?

As we read the novel, the anxieties aroused by the plot become supplemented by a more profound anxiety over its significance. What exactly did Roth have in mind by importing the Holocaust into America? What is the point of his freighted alternative history? If the novel is to amount to more than a suspense mystery for adults, what does its author mean to imply about the Jews, and about America?

To compare *The Plot Against America* with its forgotten predecessor, Sinclair Lewis's 1935 best-seller, *It Can't Happen Here*, is to acknowledge how much more plausibly Roth has portrayed his imagined America. The substantiality of the Roth family, and the use of "himself" as a child narrator, go a long way toward establishing credibility. In one wonderful sequence, the family takes a road trip to the nation's capital, only to find that the citadel of democracy has been claimed by anti-Semites who now enjoy the approval of their government. Mother is afraid that her husband's anger will "frighten the little one," but in the father's retort—"The little one knows everything already"—we sense the alert child who will grow up to become the author of this book.

Roth also has it over Lewis in supplying a much more convincing

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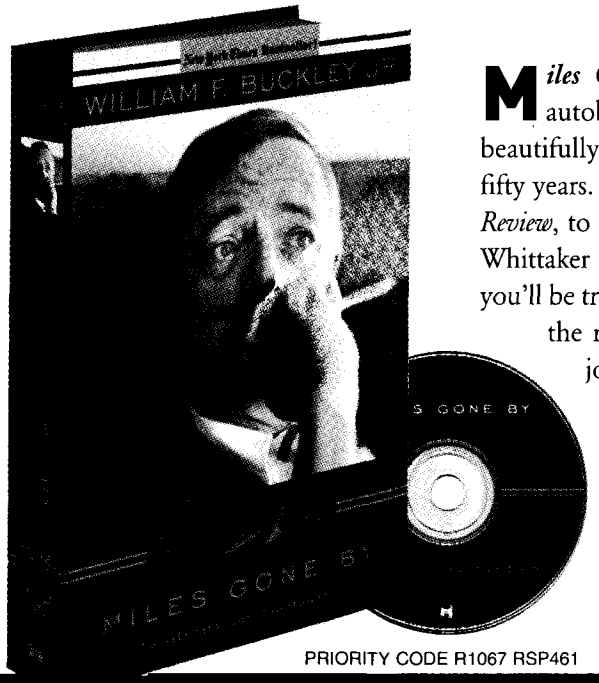

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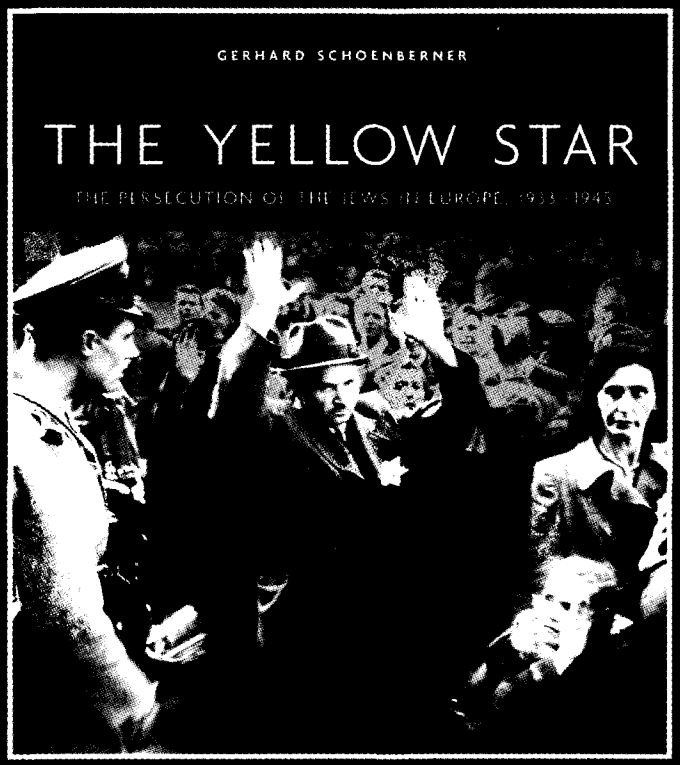

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rationale for the advent of a proto-fascist President. Sinclair Lewis's demagogue, Buzz Windrip—modeled on the Louisiana politician Huey Long—is far less convincing as an American idol than Roth's aviator-hero, who, instead of drumming up bigotry, appeals to the quintessential American desire for peace. In his campaigning, Roth's Lindbergh never mentions the Jews, and offers no domestic program other than a promise to keep Americans out of combat. Sounding less like Hitler than like Howard Dean, he wins the election over FDR with the motto, "Vote for Lindbergh or vote for war."

IN FACT, Roth did not have to tinker very much with American history, or with his memories of his childhood, to evoke Jewish fears circa 1940. Roosevelt himself was no Churchill: although he tried to shore up the country's military preparedness, he also took pains to avoid being targeted as a warmonger. And even after entering the war, he shunned rescue operations on behalf of the European Jews targeted by Hitler. There were, as Roth relates, some Jews who spoke out forcefully, but by and large the American Jewish community, if not as passive as some historians have retrospectively charged, did not distinguish itself by acts of political daring.

All of this rings true, and makes us willing to accept the idea that an antiwar candidate *might* actually have come to power and kept America out of the conflict. Far less credible, however, is the premise of America's Nazification. This rings almost as false as the accusation of some, at the time, that "the Jews" were taking over the country.

Interestingly enough, when it comes to describing that which is historically less plausible, Roth's artistry also begins to fail him. Here are the two brothers whispering in the dark after Sandy's return from his reeducation program in Kansas:

> "Did you eat ham?"
>
> "We had ham for dinner about two times a week. Mr. Mawhinney makes his own ham. He has a special family recipe. He says if a ham isn't hung up to be aged for a year he doesn't want to eat it."
>
> "Did you eat sausage?"
>
> "Yeah. He makes the sausage, too. They grind it in a sausage grinder. We had sausage sometimes instead of bacon. It's good. Pork chops. They're good too. They're great. I don't really know why we don't eat it."
>
> "Because it's stuff from a pig."
>
> "So what? Why do you think farmers raise pigs? For people to look at 'em? It's like anything else you eat. You just eat it, and it's really good."

Even a writer as skillful as Roth cannot bring to life so phony a conversation. A Jewish boy in Newark in 1940 might well have identified with a tractor driver on a Soviet kolkhoz—but with the pig farmers of Kentucky? It is not a fascist government that has turned Sandy into a ventriloquist's dummy; it is his novelist-creator.

Roth's lack of conviction about his own central plot device is palpable throughout. Most of the actual fright that occurs in the novel is caused by the kind of domestic violence that has nothing to do with government provocation—as when Philip gets into trouble by forging a note, or when he mistakes a neighbor's corpse for the corpse of his father. On one devastating night in 1942, blood, we read, "spattered the length and breadth of our imitation Oriental rug, blood dripping from the splintered remains of our coffee table, blood smeared like a sign across my father's forehead, blood spurting from my cousin's nose." A pogrom? No, the damage has been done in a fight between Herman Roth and his nephew. Mob violence against Jews does occur in the novel's climax, but its menace derives from Roth's invoking the German precedent of *Kristallnacht*, the "Night of Broken Glass." Nor does he anywhere show us an American politician elected on a platform of anti-Semitism. As far as his counterhistory is concerned, this political eventuality, too, remains just as it was then and has remained in fact: a foreign growth that has never taken root in this country.

In the rushed and complicated denouement of the novel, Lindbergh simply disappears. Once he is gone, the Vice President is deposed, FDR is effortlessly restored to office, and Roth's animating political conceit fizzles in two pages like a spent firecracker. In a kind of last-ditch rescue operation, the novelist turns back the clock to the moment when the anti-Semites are still in power, so that we can once again feel, through Philip, a child's "perpetual fear." The novel ends lamely on a note of guilt and penance, with Philip reflecting on his betrayal of the boy downstairs.

SO WHAT kind of political novel is this? Does Roth intend, as some have speculated, to alert us to today's recrudescence of global anti-Semitism, and what *it* might portend for American Jews? If so, that would suggest an analogy between the war against the Jews in Europe in the 1930's and 1940's and the Arab-Muslim incitement against Jews and the Jewish state that has come to infect whole sectors of advanced Western society.

There is, of course, something (though hardly everything) to such an analogy. Today, as then, the enemies of the Jews are the enemies of America and of democracy. Today, as then, those who defend the Jews have been charged with dragging America into a useless and unnecessary war. Today, as then, America is itself politically divided, between those prepared to battle and defeat the enemies of democracy and those, then on the Right but now mainly on the Left, who wish to keep out of the conflict or who question the bona fides of the United States in prosecuting it.

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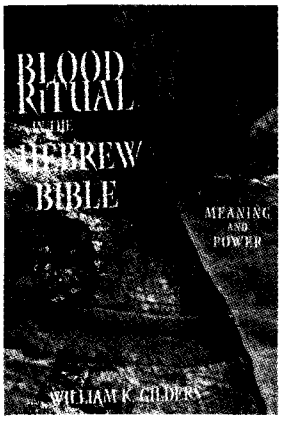

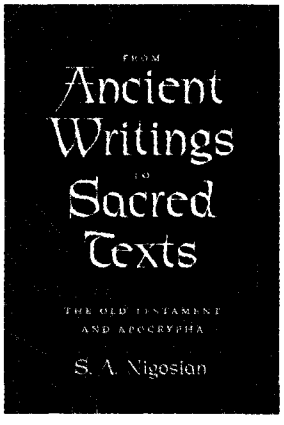

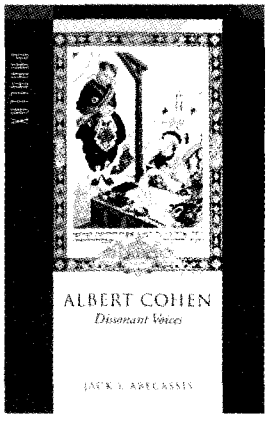

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But there is a complication in pursuing the analogy. If it is to hold, today's equivalent of the Herman Roth character in this novel would be someone leading the charge for George W. Bush, and today's equivalent of his nephew would be joining the American military to go fight in Iraq. This, however, Roth does not and apparently dares not imply. Quite the contrary: perhaps fearful that readers might draw precisely such a conclusion from his exercise in alternative history, he launched a preemptive strike before the book's publication by declaring George W. Bush "unfit to run a hardware store, let alone a nation like this one."

But if one does not want to oblige today's American Jews to do anything about "a genuine anti-Semitic threat," why, then, write a novel explicitly aimed at exposing them to "the danger"? Why ratchet up the peril, raise the temperature of fear? The question, alas, answers itself. Many American Jews, including, it would seem, some of the most enthusiastic reviewers of this book, define their own Jewish consciousness and values not by means of religious worship, observance of commandments, community affiliation, or work on behalf of Israel, but through commemorations of the Holocaust. Behind *The Plot Against America* stretch the many years that American Jews have consecrated to Holocaust education and Holocaust simulation, activities based on the notion that there is moral and spiritual merit in the vicarious re-experiencing of so dire a past. But while the original impulse behind such commemoration was linked to the vow of Never Again!, implying a need to take effective political action on behalf of the Jewish people, Holocaust memorialization has increasingly slipped into little more than self-indulgent paranoia. For all Roth's intelligence, and for all his sophistication in turning this tendency to literary advantage, his book also exemplifies it.

There may be, as well, a more urgent personal aspect to Roth's nostalgia for a time when anti-Semitism was in flower. Creating a fictional climate of fear has paradoxically allowed him to write about his childhood with greater tenderness and appreciation than he has ever done before. The same qualities in his parents' generation that once drew his satirical ire—above all, their sheer, maddening decency—acquire dignity and worth when seen against the background of an America that wants, as it were, to stamp them out. Without the anti-Semitism, they were simply the Jewish bourgeoisie, avatars of the reviled middle class; magnify the background of fascism, and they step forth as moral heroes.

Naturally, the literary imagination is free to wander where it wishes, and Roth's produces very lively fiction. But as a novel about politics, this book is irrelevant—except perhaps inadvertently. For, aside from the real possibility of Islamic terrorism directed against Jewish targets in America, there is the no less real potential today for a kind of homegrown anti-Semitic coalition, combining elements of the isolationist Buchananite Right (Lindbergh's direct heirs) with the much more energetic and influential forces of the anti-Israel and anti-American Left. We have had a foretaste of where this malign conjunction could lead in the recent campaign to smear AIPAC and a (non-Jewish) Pentagon analyst for allegedly passing draft classified documents to Israel.

This real-life episode might well have been drawn directly from the pages of a novel entitled *The Plot Against America*. But it would not be this novel, nor would its moral be the least bit similar. For the real fear aroused by Roth's novel is not that America is under "threat of becoming fascist" but that many of its leading cultural figures, and a part of American Jewry, are not prepared to sustain a war against the anti-Semites and the America-haters of our own time. The danger it points up is not the danger it describes; the danger it points up is of political infantilization.

Atlantic Avenue

Free World:
America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West
by Timothy Garton Ash
Random House. 286 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Francis Fukuyama

ON FEBRUARY 15, 2003, a month prior to the American intervention in Iraq, massive antiwar demonstrations took place all over Western Europe. They were held not just in Berlin and Paris but also in London, Madrid, and Rome, capitals of nations whose leaders supported Washington in its effort to topple Saddam Hussein.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former Socialist finance minister of France, saw in this day of anti-American protest the birth date of a new European nation. Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas, the continent's two most prominent philosophers, issued a joint statement concurring in Strauss-Kahn's judgment and outlining six elements that in their view set the new European identity apart from America's. These included a strict adherence to secularism, state intervention to "correct" the market and buffer society from capitalism, the overcoming of national sovereignty, and the replacement of this now-outmoded arrangement by an international legal order.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA *is professor of international political economy at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the author most recently of* State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century *(Cornell).*

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What are we to make of these and other, similar disputes—over the death penalty, the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto protocol on global warming, the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay? Are they just temporary spats among countries sharing substantial values and interests, like disagreements during the cold war over Suez in the 1950's or over the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the 1980's? Or do the current splits herald a disintegration of the cold-war West and a return to a 19th-century-type balance of power, with the U.S., the world's superpower, maneuvering indifferently among the European Union, China, Russia, and others?

The trans-Atlantic chasm has by now generated its own substantial literature. The best known example is Robert Kagan's *Of Paradise and Power* (2003), which famously argues that Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus—i.e., that the differences between them are both deep and of the essence. One of Kagan's earliest critics was Timothy Garton Ash, a fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and during the 1990's a perceptive writer on Eastern Europe and its transition out of Communism.

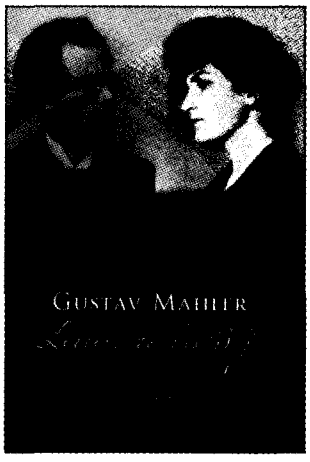
In *Free World*, Ash continues his critique of Kagan by laying out a systematic account of why he believes the trans-Atlantic rift is not permanent or necessary, and how the "free world" that we used to celebrate in the days of the cold war might be restored. While I would very much like to be persuaded that Ash is right, I think that in the end he underestimates not only the depth of existing differences but the difficulty of coming to an agreement on a common agenda.

Ash's account of the differences themselves should be familiar to readers of works like Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism*. Americans, he writes, are more religious than Europeans; they are more distrustful of the state; they tolerate greater economic inequality in return for greater individual freedom; they place more emphasis on economic growth than on protection of the environment; they are more jealous of national sovereignty; and they have their own, non-European views on matters like gun ownership and the death penalty.

Ash's rendition of these differences is honest and for the most part thorough, although he would have done well to pay closer attention to Kagan's insight concerning the uses of military power. In the American national story, force has been employed repeatedly to achieve ends that are ultimately interpreted as morally redemptive. This is especially true in the case of the Civil War, World War II, and the cold war. By contrast, much of present-day European consciousness is still shaped by the senseless slaughter of World War I and, in Germany, by the Nazi debacle. Thus, in the decades after 1945, the Germans sought to reclaim their moral standing by, as it were, unloading their sovereignty onto a host of international institutions and by turning their children into pacifists. Since this was a transformation we applauded, it should not surprise us that Germans now denounce the American strategy of preemptive war.

But Ash has a somewhat different point to make about this litany of divisions. To him, it simplifies and falsifies reality by suggesting that a uniform point of view holds sway on each side of the Atlantic. In actuality, he writes, Europeans are themselves divided into Euro-Atlanticists and Euro-Gaullists; the former want political ties with the U.S. and worry about the statist tendencies of the European Union, while the latter see the EU as a competitive counterweight to the U.S. and champion the Brussels version of the welfare state. ("Janus Britain" is schizophrenically suspended somewhere between the two.)

Gustav Mahler
Letters to his Wife



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Americans, for their part, are divided between what have come to be called red and blue voters. The Left (or blue) side of the American political spectrum corresponds to the Right, or Atlanticist, side in Europe, while such quintessentially American characteristics as anti-statism, gun ownership, and pugnacious hostility to international institutions are typically to be found only on the red side, the side that tends to vote Republican.

The resulting political Venn diagram thus half-overlaps. Although Europe is largely devoid of anyone resembling a Republican, and America has no socialists, both Europe and America have the equivalent of American Democrats. It is in that intersecting space that Ash sees the "surprising future" he proclaims in the subtitle of this book—the space where John Kerry's America makes common cause with Euro-Atlanticists. These two forces can, he believes, nudge the U.S. toward greater multilateralism and Europe toward closer trans-Atlantic cooperation.

To help bring this future closer, Ash proposes a set of common projects. They include bringing about political reform in the Middle East—where, he argues, Americans and Europeans differ not on ends but only on means; addressing environmental threats like global warming; and, most importantly, dealing with global poverty and underdevelopment. Even the Bush administration, Ash argues, has seen these last conditions as an underlying cause of terrorism, and they offer especially fruitful occasions for trans-Atlantic cooperation and joint planning.

LET US leave aside the question of the desirability of re-uniting the free world around Ash's agenda, and speak only of its practicality. One can believe, as I do, that the Bush administration's disdain for multilateralism unnecessarily alienated potential friends while also finding Ash seriously askew in his estimate of the current rift. Not only is it inconceivable that any foreseeable Republican administration would place the environment or global poverty front and center in its foreign policy, there are good reasons for thinking that even a Democratic administration, even one led by John Kerry, would find it extremely difficult to arrive at a meeting of minds with Euro-Atlanticists.

The first reason has to do with threat perception. Prosecuting the war on terrorism does not even appear as an item on Ash's common agenda, and yet it is, and will necessarily remain, a preoccupation for any future occupant of the White House. Americans tend to believe that September 11 represents only the beginning of a new age of nihilistic, mass-casualty terrorism, while Europeans tend to think of it as a single lucky shot, of a kind familiar to them through their experience with the IRA or the Baader-Meinhoff gang.

In campaigning for the presidency, John Kerry said he looked forward to the day when terrorism would be a nuisance rather than a mortal threat. Many Europeans believe it is nothing more than a nuisance now—even though, given the large Muslim populations in countries like France and Holland, they are more threatened by Islamist radicalism than are Americans. Nor are we particularly well positioned to help them with their problem; our advice to them on taking Turkey into the EU has been seen not as friendly but as meddling.

Second, persistent differences concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will greatly inhibit cooperation on broader political reform in the Middle East. Democrats and Republicans are united in believing that the Camp David negotiations at the end of the Clinton term offered a good deal for Palestinians, and that the fault for the breakdown of those talks lay with Yasir Arafat. Europeans believe otherwise, but they are fooling themselves if they think a Democratic administration would simply turn the clock back to something like the failed Oslo process.

The final reason concerns American credibility. In the past, the United States has played a critical role in solving the Europeans' near-inability to take collective action. This was nowhere truer than in the Balkans, where a decade ago it required American airpower and diplomacy to bring about settlements in Bosnia and Kosovo—as Ash, who has written about these matters, well knows. Indeed, the Europeans' failure to put their own house in order is one of the reasons that American officials treated them so brusquely in the lead-up to the Iraq war.

But the perceived legitimacy of the American role depends entirely on its being successful. You will be regarded as a leader if you break Serbian power without suffering a single casualty; you will be regarded as an arrogant unilateralist if you fail to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq or get bogged down in a guerrilla insurgency. For Tony Blair, the cost of being associated with George W. Bush has been so high as to put into question the ability of any future British prime minister to be so protective of the "special relationship" with the United States.

Ash is correct in stating that if frictions between American officials and the Euro-Gaullists escalate further, a permanent rift could indeed become a self-fulfilling prophecy. By the same token, however, one cannot simply will into existence a set of common interests on a scale sufficient to replace the once-overwhelming Soviet threat. Americans are increasingly involved in parts of the world where their interests are not shared by Europeans, and they have very different attitudes toward sovereignty and the legitimacy of international institutions. It would probably take the pres-

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sure of unforeseen future events, like a major terrorist attack in "old" Europe, or a wholesale domestic realignment that moves American politics sharply leftward, to put the Western Humpty-Dumpty back together again. In the meantime, Europeans who lay the blame for the current rift on the personality of George W. Bush have been looking in the wrong place.

Op-Art

In the Shadow of No Towers
by Art Spiegelman
Pantheon. 42 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
Michael J. Lewis

Like all primitive forms of art, comic books can express simple things in a bold way. There is no more effective way of telling a story, especially one punctuated by the visually arresting exploits of superheroes. And comic books are also ideal venues for presenting dreams and myths. For what are dreams but a species of graphic communication, using symbols and metaphors to penetrate beneath the surface and reveal the hidden meaning of things?

For these reasons, one might expect that a comic book about September 11 might express truths that could not otherwise be easily expressed. And there was cause to believe that the author of such a comic book might be Art Spiegelman. The child of Auschwitz survivors, Spiegelman was the creator of *Maus, A Survivor's Tale* (1986), a comic book that retold the story of the concentration camps as a terrifying adult fable in which Nazi guards were depicted as cats and Jewish prisoners as mice.

Maus won a Pulitzer Prize and gained Spiegelman a coveted slot as staff artist for the *New Yorker*, where he worked from 1992 to 2002. As fate would have it, his most famous effort would adorn the magazine's first post-9/11 issue: a black cover from which the towers of the World Trade Center emerged as barely perceptible ghosts, printed in even deeper black.

Spiegelman lived and worked a few blocks to the north of the towers, and he witnessed their destruction at close hand. Having spent a frantic morning trying to track down his daughter at her neighborhood school, he returned to see what would become, for him, the emblematic image of the day: "the looming north tower's glowing bones just before it vaporized." That image became a leitmotif in the drawings he began making that same evening as a kind of personal therapy.

Over the next years, Spiegelman produced ten large-format narrative sheets for the German weekly, *Die Zeit*. They were also published in newspapers in Italy, France, and the Netherlands—countries where, he writes, "my political views hardly seemed extreme." But when he offered the sheets to the *New Yorker*, he was turned down, as he was by the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*. Now they have been published as a book.

In the Shadow of No Towers is a handsome object, its slender vertical format deliberately evoking the proportions of the towers, which grace the cover in a reprise of Spiegelman's famous black-on-black *New Yorker* cover. Inside, the book does not offer a straightforward narrative; instead, as Spiegelman explains, "the collage-like nature of a newspaper page encouraged my impulse to juxtapose my fragmentary thoughts in different styles." Each sheet thus consists of a loose as-

Michael J. Lewis, *who teaches art at Williams College, contributed "Architecture (Bling!)" to our October issue.*

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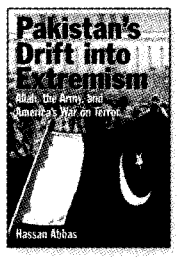

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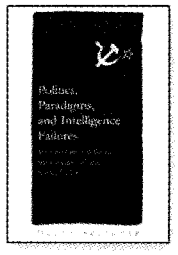

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sembly of vignettes, in which real characters and cartoon characters respond with dark humor to the same events and stride blithely into one another's worlds.

The cartoon characters invoke the great comics of the early 20th century: *Bringing Up Father*, the *Katzenjammer Kids*, and that fanciful masterpiece of surrealism, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. In the back of the book, Spiegelman reprints handsome full-size versions of these comics, evidently as a way of filling out what would otherwise be an exceptionally skimpy volume. The examples, depicting New York skyscrapers or Fourth of July shenanigans, have been cleverly chosen to relate to 9/11, although it must be said that their remarkably high level of skill casts an unfortunate light on the limits of Spiegelman's own talents.

In a revealing preface, Spiegelman relates how, in the days after 9/11, he brooded over the American government's possible "complicity" in the attacks. If he later abandoned his conspiracy theories, it was not because of any judicious reading of the evidence but because he did not want to be associated with an idea whose proponents were largely anti-Semites:

> Only when I heard paranoid Arab Americans blaming it all on the Jews did I reel myself back in, deciding it wasn't essential to know precisely how much my "leaders" knew about the hijackings in advance—it was sufficient that they immediately instrumentalized the attack for their own agenda.

THIS TORTUOUS reasoning may account for the odd dislocation at the center of *In the Shadow of No Towers*. Apart from the second sheet, which shows a turbaned terrorist with a bloody scimitar confronting President Bush, who is in turn armed with a flag and a revolver, we see no Islamic terrorists in this book. To the contrary: the gloss under the image of Bush and the terrorist informs us that Spiegelman is "equally terrorized by al Qaeda and by his own government." Throughout the remainder of the book, the only figures actively engaged in murderous acts are Uncle Sam, George W. Bush, and the Bush administration.

On television, 9/11 offered a panoply of graphic imagery: the fireball of the second plane, the black cloud over Manhattan, the pneumatic plunge of the towers. These are the raw materials of any comic-book version of that day. But in Spiegelman's reassignment of leading roles, Osama bin Laden makes no appearance at all, while President Bush is depicted, for example, toppling the Statue of Liberty. Nor do we see the brutal hijackers; instead we see a comic ren-

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dition of Dick Cheney astride an American eagle, slitting its throat.

By far the most obscene panel addresses the agony of being burned alive, a prospect whose horror impelled somewhere between 100 and 200 victims to leap to their deaths. In Spiegelman's version, it is the adorably mischievous Katzenjammer Kids who are burned alive, running around in circles after Uncle Sam dowses them with oil.

In the single tiny panel devoted to the attack on Washington, we are shown an image from a bubblegum card of the 1950's that is straight out of the movie *Earth Versus the Flying Saucers*; in it, the Capitol is being devastated by laser beams. Here Spiegelman has not only disguised once again the actual role played by Islamic terrorists but thoroughly inverted the original significance of the image.

The science-fiction movies of the 1950's used alien invaders as cold-war metaphors, permitting us to contemplate the unthinkable consequences of a nuclear attack on our territory. Such films were as psychologically necessary as a child's fairy tale with its images of abandonment and loss. In the case of 9/11, however, the attack was not imagined but real. Spiegelman's metaphor thus serves only to mask what *he* cannot bear to know, or refuses to admit. Although he has fastidiously declined to accuse the United States of direct complicity in the attacks, his dream-world version of 9/11 contains neither any American heroism—no firemen or police slogging upward to their deaths, no Todd Beamer and Jeremy Glickman charging the cockpit to prevent the mass murder of others—nor any American virtue, and the only malefactors on the scene are the leaders of the United States themselves, their hands soaked to the elbows in oil and blood.

The actions of the unconscious are involuntary, of course, and no one should be blamed for the dreams he dreams. But *In the Shadow of No Towers* cannot claim the privilege of a dream, even a comic-book dream. It lacks the anarchy of a genuine dream, the delirious triumph over daytime taboos that we find expressed, for example, in the comics of R. Crumb. In its place there is the sense of a conscious and rather labored effort to make propaganda.

If there is a taboo in Spiegelman's mind, it resides in the idea of taking sides with his own country against its enemies. He certainly comes nowhere near violating *that* taboo in this sad screed, which would be malevolent were it not, artistically as well as morally, so deeply embarrassing.

Tales Tall & Small

The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories
Edited by Ben Marcus
Anchor. 480 pp. $13.00

When the Nines Roll Over and Other Stories
by David Benioff
Viking. 223 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
Sam Munson

THERE ARE 29 stories in *The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories*. "In 29 separate but ingenious ways," writes its editor, Ben Marcus, they "seek permanent residence within a reader." Whatever that sentence is supposed to mean—separate *but* ingenious?—the stories selected by Marcus do represent a reasonably comprehensive cross-section of the younger generation of contemporary American writers. Some of these writers—David Foster Wallace, Anne Carson, Jhumpa

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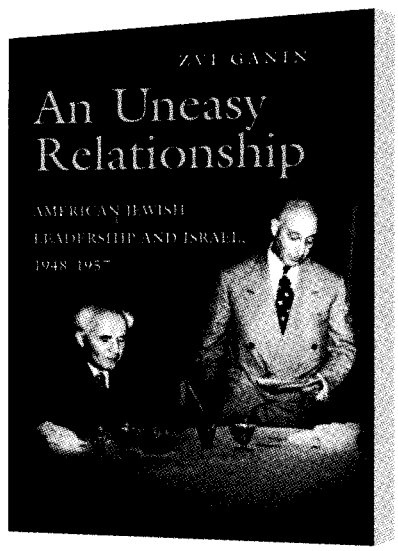
SAM MUNSON *reviewed Lara Vapnyar's* There Are Jews in My House *in the March* COMMENTARY.



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Lahiri—are already well-known. Others, like Sam Lipsyte, George Saunders, and Padgett Powell, while not exactly famous, can nevertheless be found in the pages of *Harper's* or the *New Yorker*. Even the obscure are hardly starving, having placed stories in collections under established imprints.

In length, the stories collected here range from two to 39 pages. In subject matter, they cover a familiar range of territory: incest, dysfunctional relationships, addiction, violence, poverty, lower-class despair, middle-class despair, upper-middle-class despair. Some, like those by Stephen Dixon, Aimee Bender, and Lydia Davis, follow the Donald Barthelme model: spare, slightly surreal. Others, including the contributions by Deborah Eisenberg, Mary Gaitskill, and Anthony Doerr, adhere to the expansive, quirky American style pioneered by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Saul Bellow.

In the end, this is a placid, unexceptionable book, whose tenor is best captured in a story titled "Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned," by Wells Tower. The action takes place among a group of Vikings. Threatened with impoverishment on account of their ruined crops, the Vikings set off on a coastal raid to kill the wizard whom they hold responsible. When he turns out not to be the wizard they are looking for, their leader murders him anyway, provoking uneasiness among the men both about their safety and about the worthiness of their goals. Now they set their sights on a neighboring town; in the course of an abortive raid, one of them, the affection-starved Gnut, meets the daughter of a local. She is missing an arm from a previous Viking attack. Perhaps out of a dawning sense of responsibility, Gnut falls in love with her and brings her back to his hut. They live, to coin a phrase, happily ever after.

Tower writes about the Viking marauders as if they were modern Americans in their early thirties finally facing the fact of their long-delayed adulthood and trying to come to terms with it. The voice of the narrator, himself one of the raiders, is full of anachronisms, as is the speech of his comrades. Here is the story's first sentence: "Just as we were all getting back into the mainland domestic groove, somebody started in with dragons and crop blight from across the North Sea."

It is hard to pinpoint what is so thoroughly deficient in this story. Tower, a wholly professional writer, *seems* to take his characters' fears and hopes seriously, perhaps intending to suggest that niggling but deep insecurities about job and home are not specific to our own time. But he succeeds only in making the Vikings themselves seem incapacitated and risible. Inevitably, one is left wondering what might have been done with the same material by a writer of greater gifts.

And that is the impression one takes from the book as a whole. In nearly all of the stories, Vikings, in one form or another, appear again and again: a pageant of characters engaged in wildly varied activities, from secretly tending a garden on a large estate (Anthony Doerr's "The Caretaker") to wandering pointlessly through some vaguely Beckettian terrain (Stephen Dixon's "Down the Road"), but all possessing the sensibilities, and the voice, of middle-class, college-educated Americans, or more precisely of those who write stories about them. Could this crushing similarity be the reason behind Ben Marcus's no doubt inadvertent suggestion that a story's individuality is somehow at odds with its ingenuity?

A WRITER not included by Marcus is David Benioff, the author of a novel, *The 25th Hour* (2001), on which a movie was based, and also of the screenplay for the movie *Troy*. His new collection of stories, *When the Nines Roll Over*, demonstrates a devotion to craft, a considerable fund of talent, and a lightness and playfulness wholly absent from *The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories*. Even better, and again in contrast to so many of his contemporaries, Benioff is deeply interested in life outside his own sphere and his own thoughts and sensibilities, and he knows how to transcribe compellingly what he sees and imagines.

There are two first-rate stories in *When the Nines Roll Over*. One of them, "The Devil Comes To Orekhovo," recounts the adventures of Leksi, a green recruit in the Russian army, and two of his fellow soldiers as they ferret out rebels in Chechnya. (Already we are far away from the world of Marcus's collection.) In an apparently abandoned mansion, they discover the owner, an old woman, hiding in a room beneath the basement floor. The two older soldiers assign to Leksi the job of taking her out to the woods and shooting her. On the way, she tells him a folktale, whose title is "When The Devil Came to Orekhovo" and in which the devil is at last defeated. In the end, Leksi finds that he cannot manage the job of killing the old woman; she escapes, but only to be tracked down and shot by Surkhov, his superior officer.

"The Devil Comes to Orekhovo" is a grim story, a story about very real deviltry; but Benioff manages to make it a buoyant one. In part he does this through his eye for the telling detail, as when the soldiers discover an antique doll in the house and put Leksi through the humiliating ceremony of having to kiss it. But "The Devil Comes to Orekhovo" succeeds by means of more than its taste for the picturesque. Listening to the old woman's story, Leksi finds himself wondering urgently what will happen if he lets her go, perhaps to alert the Chechens and provoke a deadly counterattack. (He manages to convince himself this will not happen.) In another interjection of moral speculation into an unbearably tense situation, the terrified

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Leksi ponders whether the vanquished devil in the woman's story might not really be such a bad creature after all: "He wanted to marry the world's most beautiful woman. What was wrong with that?" In its own marriage of crystallized sensual detail, humor, and hovering menace, this story inevitably calls to mind the compressed mastery of Isaac Babel in his *Red Cavalry* tales.

"Zoanthropy," the third story in the collection, concerns a confrontation of another sort: between a young man, Mackenzie Bonner, and a lion who makes an unexplained appearance on the streets of Manhattan. The lion first enters Bonner's life in the courtyard of the Frick Museum; so does Louis Butchko, a museum guard who has been appointed as "The Lover of the East Coast" by some mysterious higher authority and is responsible for satisfying the desires of unfulfilled women "from the northern tip of Maine to Georgia." Eventually, Bonner's father, a renowned big-game hunter, is called in to dispatch the animal, which he does on the steps of the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park. That night, looking out his window, Bonner observes Butchko *in flagrante delicto*.

"Zoanthropy" radiates a palpable sense of unnerving delight, recalling J.D. Salinger's "Just Before the War With the Eskimos" or "The Laughing Man." Making use of many of the conventions of contemporary short fiction—the plot is somewhat fantastic; the narrator is an unemployed and insecure young man; the story's "meaning" hinges on the idea that human relationships are impenetrably mysterious—it is also a simple celebration of its own improbable situation and of the characters who inhabit it. Benioff steadfastly refuses to reduce Bonner to a thinly veiled version of himself; even the young man's most intimate thoughts are wholly his own, unburdened by writerly elaboration or metaphor. After telling his father about his encounter with the lion, Bonner watches a telltale smile dawn on the older man's face:

> It was the Smile for Mackenzie, the expression he reserved for me alone. This is what you need to know about my father: he was a man who made his living killing animals, though he adored animals and disdained men. But I was his love's son, and that gave me immunity from disdain. . . . [H]is turn in the world was far from gentle, but he was gentle with me.

Even in the lesser stories in this collection, Benioff succeeds in creating characters who speak like themselves. "The Barefoot Girl in Clover," "Merde for Luck," and the title story—all three are about love irredeemably lost—are blessedly free of the abstract and faintly academic discourse that is the bane of the *Anchor* anthology. Compare Sadjoe, the forlorn musician of "When the Nines Roll Over," who manages to maintain his intuitive wit even in the face of the talent agent who has stolen his girl—"Jesus, Tabachnik. Don't you have any imagination, man? Don't you have any fucking imagination? You think you turn the corner and I just disappear?"—with the reflections of the narrator of A.M. Homes's "Do Not Disturb" on his disintegrating relationship with his wife: "The situation has become oxygenless and addicting, a suffocating annihilation." In the latter, it is the reader who does most of the suffocating.

In his introduction to the *Anchor* anthology, Ben Marcus makes another puzzling statement: with these stories, he writes, "you could build a civilization." If so, it would be a singularly uninspiring one. David

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Benioff enters no such claims of grandeur for his work, which, whether or not it contains the seeds of a civilization, does contain more than one vibrant and recognizable human being. Grounds enough, in my opinion, to be thankful.

Scandal in Black & White

Hard News:
The Scandals at the New York Times and the Future of American Media
by Seth Mnookin
Random House. 330 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

AT SOME point during the 2003 commotion over Jayson Blair at the *New York Times*, I found myself embracing a heretical thought: that the story was far less earth-shaking than the paper itself was postulating. Did it really matter so much that a screwed-up young man had plagiarized some stories, had done a lot less on-the-scene reporting than he represented, was finally caught, and rapidly retired?

Clearly, the sequence raised serious personnel issues for the paper's management. But had readers of Blair's articles been misled about any major matters? Were his transgressions really worth four full pages in a Sunday edition of the *Times*—roughly six times the space given that same day to the impending Bush tax cuts? Was it really necessary, three days later, to take over a Broadway movie theater so that the staff—every last *Times* employee appears to have been invited—could collectively discuss the meaning of it all?

And what *was* the meaning of it all? When the newspaper's publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., arose at the meeting to address this question, what he came out with was: "We didn't do this right. We regret that deeply. It sucks."

Seth Mnookin, a reporter who has written about the media for *Newsweek* and other publications, rates that answer as inadequate. He believes the Jayson Blair affair incorporates large lessons that the media ignore at their peril. He also suggests that the sequence of events—which culminated in the dismissal of the paper's two top editors—showed serious weaknesses in the *Times* organization. In the course of developing these themes, drawing upon more than 100 interviews (many with staff people talking off the record), he gives readers a good look at the *Times*'s peculiar "culture."

Hard News begins with a familiar tale: the rise and long reign of the Sulzberger family, which took over the daily in 1896 and has retained control ever since. We get a brief sketch of the current incumbent. Many people do not like "Pinch," as Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr. is often called (satirically echoing his father's nickname of "Punch"), and one senses that Mnookin is among them. He depicts the younger Sulzberger as a child of the 60's with a mystical side and derisory ideas about management, like "empowering" newsroom denizens low in the pecking order.

Next we come to the book's main character—one might actually say "main villain." He turns out not to be Jayson Blair but Howell Raines, the executive editor who was running the *Times* when the scandal broke and who was one of those ultimately fired in its wake. Over a span of 80 pages, Mnookin takes us through Raines's journey: a string of journalism jobs beginning in his native Alabama and leading quite rapidly to a job as a correspondent for the *Times* covering the Reagan White House. In the paper's Washington bureau he met the young Arthur, nominally a reporter but obviously making one more stop on an heir-apparent's tour of the family business. The two soon became friendly.

In Mnookin's account, Raines appears to have cast himself as a mentor to Sulzberger. Over time—long after they had stopped working in the same office—the relationship became a kind of courtship, with Raines making it clear that he yearned for higher things. He soon landed a job running the London bureau, and two years later won the far more important position of Washington bureau chief.

In the early 1990's, with Arthur, Jr. now established as publisher, Raines offered himself as a regular op-ed columnist. Sulzberger countered with an even better deal: editorial-page editor. For the next nine years, Raines was in charge of *Times* editorials, tilting noticeably farther to the left than his predecessors but obviously not distressing the publisher (who is himself well to the left of his father). In 2001, just six days before 9/11, Raines took over as executive editor, i.e., boss of all news operations. The paper's coverage of the Twin Towers disaster was judged a huge success and won seven Pulitzer Prizes, a record for a single publication.

Raines was on top of the world. His wedding reception in March 2003 was attended by New York's governor and senior U.S. Senator, the city's mayor, three network anchormen, and, of course, the top tier at the *Times*. But six weeks later Jayson Blair was in trouble and, it soon became clear, so was Howell Raines.

THE STORY of Jayson Blair—a young black man with virtually no prior professional experience when the *Times* hired him—comprises about half the book and is mostly great fun to read. The figure at the center of it all was almost comically unfit for the job he was filling. His spelling and grammar were atrocious. He had attended the Univer-

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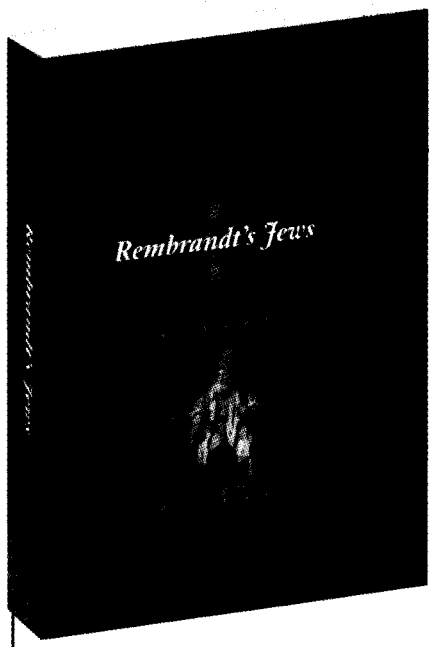
sity of Maryland, but never graduated. He had serious problems with drugs and alcohol. Long before his downfall, he was notorious for error-ridden reporting that resulted in a series of published corrections. But in the spring of 2003, he was still getting important assignments, most recently to help cover a huge national story—the sniper attacks in the Washington, D.C. area. Just before that, his byline had appeared atop a front-page news article about a missing-in-action soldier in Iraq.

The story about the missing soldier, which ran on April 26, 2003, was Blair's downfall. Datelined Los Fresnos, Texas, it featured an interview with the soldier's family and a rather detailed description of the household, including the Martha Stewart furniture on the patio. The article was read with intense interest at the *San Antonio Express-News*, which had also published a feature on the soldier's family. To anybody comparing the two articles, it would have been instantly clear that the *Times* reporter had gotten much of his information, beginning but not ending with the patio furniture, from the *Express-News*, and also had not bothered to change much of the wording. The paper's editor called the *Times* to complain, and the fat was in the fire.

Jim Roberts, a national editor who had been supervising Blair for the prior six months, called and asked the young man to explain the similarities. Reaching Blair on his cell phone, Roberts assumed he was in the Washington, D.C. area, where he was supposed to be reporting on the sniper case. In fact, Blair was in Brooklyn. It gradually emerged that (a) he had no coherent explanation for the similarities, (b) he had never been to Los Fresnos, and (c) he had invented the anonymous government sources cited in a front-page story about the Washington sniper that had been effusively praised by Raines. On May 1, Blair resigned from the paper.

Confronted with any such embarrassment, most newspapers would have run a correction and an apology and rapidly turned to other matters. The *Times*, gripped by its own mythic view of itself, was institutionally incapable of such a response. If a newspaper regards itself not just as a superior publication but as a "public trust," and sees its journalists as engaged not in mere news-gathering but in a kind of sacred calling, then reportorial derelictions like Jayson Blair's start to look like national disasters.

So the *Times* treated it as a blockbuster story. It created a task force—five experienced reporters and a senior editor—with a mandate to tell all. The *Times* being the *Times*, and wedded to "diversity," it also made sure that one of the five members of the task force was black. (There



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were complaints about diversity anyway. At the mass meeting in the theater, the absence of women on the team was scored.) When the task force turned in its final report after nine days of 'round-the-clock investigation, it was rewarded with those four full pages in the Sunday edition.

THE TASK force had been charged with explaining how the inconceivable could have happened, and what it signified for the paper's future. Approaching the conclusion of his book, Seth Mnookin incurs comparable obligations. On my reckoning, neither party has done a very good job; and the reasons for their respective failures are somewhat similar.

The law of parsimony tells us that when there are alternative explanations of events, the simplest one is likely to be correct. The most parsimonious explanation for Jayson Blair's offenses resides in the *Times*'s passionate commitment to diversity and affirmative action—i.e., preferences. In trying to understand how an inexperienced, incompetent, and irresponsible young black man could be hired and steadily advanced, no other explanation makes sense.

When the publisher is a "hawk" on behalf of affirmative action—and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr. prided himself on being exactly that—the paper's editors and executives will inevitably be hawkish in their turn. At the 2001 convention of the National Association of Black Journalists, Howell Raines declared that the *Times*'s internal affirmative-action campaign had "made our staff better, and, *more importantly*, more diverse" (emphasis added). When the top people say that diversity counts for more than good journalism, nobody down below will be eager to report malfeasance among affirmative-action hires.

One might think this would be as plain as day to both the *Times* task force and Mnookin. It is not. Both take refuge in extremely unparsimonious explanations that simply raise more questions. The task force's line on the Blair affair began with "a failure of communications among senior editors." To be sure, the task force would have had a problem with affirmative action. An explicit assignment of responsibility to racial preference would logically have been seen as a poke at the publisher—definitely not a good career move for *Times* reporters and editors.

Mnookin does not have that problem, but, it turns out, he too is a huge fan of preferences. When the scandal first broke, he wrote a column in *Newsweek* attacking the *Times* for not immediately reaffirming its commitment to diversity. In his book, we get a somewhat blurry explanation of the Blair affair. There are repeated references to Raines's bullying management style, said to have inhibited open discussion of *any* staff problems. In this connection, Mnookin also states:

> Blair's career at the *Times* had undeniably been shaped by his race—he'd initially been recruited into a minority internship program—but the vagaries of his career under Howell Raines's tenure had more to do with the favoritism and factionalism that had gripped the paper.

To which the only thing one can say is: huh?

Hard News does little to elaborate the reference in its subtitle to "the future of American media." To forestall future Jayson Blairs, Mnookin would have newspapers work much harder at ensuring accuracy in their news accounts. He proposes random fact-checking of news stories after their appearance in print, and other unlikely-to-be-adopted measures. Untouched with a ten-foot pole in *Hard News* is the possibility that systematic liberal bias at the *Times*, manifest even in its coverage of its own internal woes, is a far larger problem than inaccuracy, or even plagiarism.

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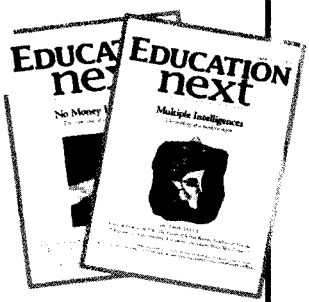

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No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is best known as a landmark—and controversial—effort by the federal government to hold public schools accountable for their performance by means of standards and tests. It is also a landmark in another, less publicized sense: it requires that all academic courses in every public school be taught by "highly qualified" teachers. This teacher requirement is unprecedented, and it has great promise.

There is a fly in the ointment, however—a problem in the way NCLB is currently written and executed that undermines its own efforts to improve teacher quality. This is a problem that our political leaders are ignoring. They shouldn't be.

On the surface, NCLB's approach makes sense. It mandates that to be highly qualified a teacher must not only have a bachelor's degree and be certified, which the states already require, but also demonstrate competence in the subject being taught. This is the great innovation of the act—it requires competence.

For new teachers, competence can be demonstrated by having a college major in the relevant subject or by taking a rigorous test of knowledge. Veteran teachers can demonstrate competence in these same ways. Or they can do it by meeting a "high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation" (HOUSSE), which the states are allowed to devise on their own.

Herein lies the problem. **The HOUSSE provisions create a loophole big enough to drive three million veteran teachers through—and the states have incentives to do just that.** They are under intense political pressure, especially from teachers unions, to protect the interests of veteran teachers and to ensure that no one loses a job. It is no accident that bad teachers have long been virtually impossible to remove from the classroom. And it is no accident that most states are now designing their HOUSSE standards to ensure that every veteran teacher can meet them, regardless of their true competence.

How do the states pull off this charade? By stipulating that their veteran teachers are not required to take substantive tests or have the relevant college majors, but can instead gain highly qualified status through some combination of teaching experience, classes in professional development, self-compiled portfolios, supervisor evaluations, and other factors that can easily produce positive outcomes for every teacher.

In Arkansas, for example, teachers with five years' experience automatically satisfy the HOUSSE standard and become "highly qualified." In Ohio and Massachusetts, teachers can meet the standard by simply racking up enough hours in professional development courses. In New Hampshire, teachers can do it by engaging in a "self-assessment" with a supervisor and "partner." And so it goes, for virtually every state—making a mockery of the law and ensuring that incompetent and mediocre teachers will not be weeded out.

This is a national travesty. The solution is for Congress to modify NCLB by eliminating the HOUSSE option, and requiring that all veteran teachers either have a college major in their subject area or pass a rigorous test of substantive competence. **The purpose of our public school system is to see that our children are receiving a quality education, not to protect the jobs of the adults who are hired to teach them.** Especially if they can't demonstrate that they are knowledgeable enough to do so.

—Terry M. Moe

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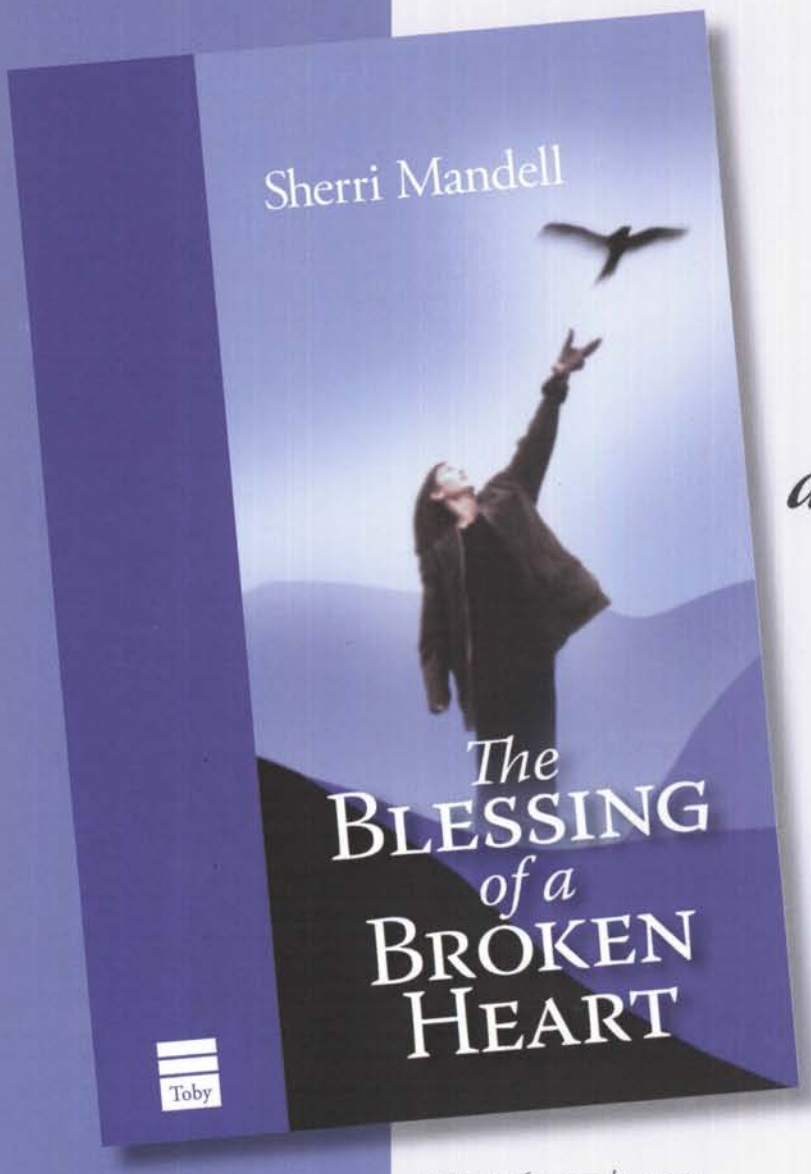

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